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~~1376~~

L E C T U R E S

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D I V I N I T Y,

DELIVERED IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

BY

JOHN HEY, D.D. *K.*

AS NORRISIAN PROFESSOR.

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VOLUME THE FIRST.

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C A M B R I D G E,

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L E O T U R S

D I V I N I T Y



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME parts of the work now presented to the public may seem to require an Apology, as not being composed with that *formality*, which may be thought requisite. The fact is, these Lectures were not written in order to be *read*; the writing was merely a *preparation for speaking*. To revise them now, and give them an appearance fit to meet the eye of a critical reader, would be a work of much time, and perhaps of little utility. Writings have often been rendered obscure by too laboured a correction, and by endeavours to reduce matter into the least possible compass. This apology, it is hoped, may suffice, if some expressions are found of rather a familiar sort, and if some remain in the form of queries.

With respect to *subject matter*, every reader of *Lectures* should be aware, that they do not pretend to be wholly *original*. If the Lecturer compiles with judgment what will be most useful to his particular hearers, and sometimes advances a step or two beyond his predecessors, he does all that ought to be expected from him. In examining what has been already said, he will naturally think for himself, from whence *something* original will result; and, if one man improves one subject a little, and another another, there is an advancement of knowledge upon the whole.

Where subjects have occasioned much dispute, and no decision has been made upon them, in which the generality have acquiesced, such as those relating to languages and customs of remote antiquity,



ADVERTISEMENT.

quity, it may often be better to content one's self with giving clear accounts of old opinions, than to aim at establishing some new one.

The *Heads* of these Lectures having been already printed, it seems desirable, that the Lectures themselves should now correspond to them; even though, for that purpose, some observations should be retained, which some readers may think of inferior moment: especially as comparing the Lectures with the Heads will always be useful towards gaining a right notion of the subject under consideration.

It may be right to add, for the sake of those diligent and attentive hearers who took Notes during the delivery of the Lectures, that they need not suspect their own accuracy, if they find some remarks in their papers which are not here; and some here, which they have not. Such differences are thus to be accounted for: if, in the delivering of a Lecture, something seemingly useful occurred, which had not occurred in the preparation, it was not always rejected, nor always written down afterwards; and if, on the other hand, there seemed to be occasion to finish any subject or chapter at any particular Lecture, that could not, in some cases be done, without omitting something, which had been prepared.

Had Mr. Malone's Inquiry concerning the genuineness of the Shakspeare papers been published, when Book 1. Chap. 13. Sect. 4. was delivered, it would have been mentioned, as containing striking examples of what is there laid down.

JULY 23, 1796.

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## B O O K I.

OF DIVINITY, AS COMMON TO ALL SECTS OF  
CHRISTIANS.

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### C H A P I.

#### GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

1. **I**N undertaking a large work, it must be useful to have *right views* of the nature of it;—without these, the work can neither be so improving, nor so pleasing and interesting, as it might be. He, who has too high notions of the task before him, will be deterred from attempting it; he, who has too low notions of it, will begin it too lightly, and will be disgusted when reality does not answer to his sanguine and visionary expectations\*.

2. If right views are so useful, in what do they *consist*?—In seeing the *extent* of the whole work; the degree of *perfection* which it admits of; the *connexion*, which the several parts have with each other, so as to judge whether a part can be studied separately; the necessary *difficulty* of studying any part; and the degree of present *pleasure*, which may be expected to arise from the study rightly pursued.

3. The

\* Luke xiv. 25.—33.



3. The *extent* of our undertaking will appear by and by. Let us, then, take notice of the degree of *perfection*, which seems to be attainable in pursuing it. The chief thing here to be observed is, that arguments and doctrines, tenets, opinions, are formed by the human mind *gradually*. At first, a man has a glimpse of something, he examines it, sees what is for and what against it; collects matter, which at first is a sort of chaos; arranges; sees new supports, new objections; works his thought into some form; surmounts difficulties; reviews his train of ideas, ere long, with ease and satisfaction; confirms his notion by experience, establishes it finally\*. The whole course of his operation resembles that of an artist, who gradually brings a rude block of marble into a pleasing form. We must not think, when a philosopher or a divine is so enraptured with a new discovery as to sacrifice to the muses, or leap out of a bath and run about the streets crying *εὕρηκα*, that his idea has acquired all that regularity and neatness, with which it afterwards appears in well written books; in such elements as those of Euclid. It often happens, that an opinion does not come to maturity in a single age. Therefore it is always right to ask, in what state of philosophy or theology (for the case is the same with both) we are at present: this must promote modesty in the teacher, and patience in the learner. And, if a teacher offers any notion of his own, as newly conceived, allowances should be made accordingly: if an opinion is old, it may be expected to be the more definite.

4. *Learning* too has its variations. It is in some respects *progressive*, but in others it is retrograde. A man may pass a long time in the invention of that, which he can explain to others in a very short time: this causes an increase of knowledge; but the

\* Acts xvii. 27.

the subjects of inquiry multiply, and this may cause a decrease of knowledge in particular subjects. When there are few things to know, a man may know every thing, as far as others know: but, when there are a great number of things to study, a man must either be wholly ignorant of some things, or know but little of any. Sometimes, new sources of knowledge are opened; as when the Herculaneum was discovered:—sometimes, old sources are stopped up; as by the irruptions of Barbarians \* into an improved country.—Sometimes, learning lies unnoticed in libraries; those, who read and think, fancy they are discovering something new, and then find, that their discoveries have been made long ago.

All this is as applicable to theological learning as to any other kind. We should therefore ask in what state of its progress or regress our *learning* or knowledge is, in any point, and let that regulate our feelings and expectations. There have been times, when the *Hebrew* language was more cultivated than it is at present: the solidity of interpretations must always be expected to be proportioned to the prevailing knowledge of original languages.

5. It may be proper, before we proceed, to deduce some particular *consequences* from what has been already remarked. And first, increase of true judgment and rational knowledge is always productive of an increase of *candor* and modesty; as increase of false judgment and ill-directed knowledge is of pedantry and mystery. When we undertake any thing in an improved age, we may have confidence consistently with modesty; because our confidence is not in ourselves, but in the candor

\* Hume's Posthumous Dialogues, p. 69.—The burning of the library at Alexandria, A. D. 646; and the sacking of Constantinople; A. D. 1204. Harris, Vol. 4.



dor and indulgence of others. This decrease of pedantry is remarkable in lawyers and physicians, at present.

6. Again, it follows, from the gradual improvement of judgement and knowledge, that we need not be ashamed at any time to declare, that our judgement is in *suspense*; or to *retract* an opinion which we have once professed. From the progressive nature of mental acquirements, nothing is more probable, than that we should see arguments on different sides of a question, whose comparative weights we cannot immediately determine; or that, on farther examination, we should discern truth where we had not discerned it before. Improvement cannot be made but by bringing to light error and imperfection; it is very idle therefore to praise improvement, and at the same time to annex any disgrace to acknowledging error. Men do so without reflecting. They naturally dislike error, and in a degree despise those who err, which indeed often deters men from owning their mistakes. The unthinking flatter themselves with the expectation of an infallible guide; in law and physic they are impatient if they have not one; and they cannot easily respect a guide in religious matters, who disclaims infallibility. Besides, they say, he has the sure word of God:—no doubt the scripture is true, but it may be falsely interpreted; and all that any man should really be understood to mean, when he speaks of “the word of God,” is human interpretation of it.—Natural religion they will allow to be in some sense uncertain: yet sometimes it is by notions of natural religion, by our conceptions of the wisdom and goodness of God, that we explore the sense of his written word.

We have several instances of the ingenuoufness here spoken of, in men remarkable for their abilities  
and

and knowledge\*. These consequences being noted, we will proceed.

7. After seeing what kind and degree of perfection we may hope to attain, let us observe how the several parts of our undertaking are connected together; there is, doubtless, some *connexion* between them all; but it must not be thought like that which we find in mathematics. Our work might be divided into several parts, each of which might be studied profitably;—when subjects occur in different parts, it is natural to say, that they have been before explained; but yet the want of the explanation of what is past will seldom make the present unintelligible. As a man may read the odes of Horace separately from the epistles, or vice versa, though it is better he should read both, so may he take separately almost any parts of a system of divinity.

8. The *difficulty* of our study is such as rather to require patience and simplicity, than depth or acuteness of judgment: the languages which divines want, may be learnt gradually, without any great exertions in any one part; the chief difficulties as to expressions in divinity, arise from not considering them as *popular*. And though something must be said concerning our motives, and our voluntary ac-

tions,  
\* The modesty and diffidence of the great *Origen* are much celebrated. See Lard. Works, Vol. 2. under *Origen* Sect. 2. and *Cave's* Hist. lit. Vol 1. p. 115. Col. 1.

*Cranmer's* retracting, is worthy of mention, as given by Gilpin. See his Life of Cranmer, p. 222.

The learned William Wotton retracts, Vol. 1. Misna; p. 314. *Augustin* has published two books of retractations. Archbishop *Usher* retracts an opinion; see de Symb. p. 17. Michaelis. Introd. Lectures, Sect. 68, Quarto, does the same, about the Codex Argenteus. Mr. Hume's note at the beginning of his Essay on the populousness of ancient nations might be mentioned, as also Locke's confessing he did not understand 1 Cor. xi. 10. And Cicero's passage, which is the motto to Locke's Essay on the Understanding.



tions, as well as concerning the nature of God, and the part which he acts in the salvation of mankind, and the divine decrees, yet it seems as if nothing more were wanting, I do not say to make them, perfectly *clear*, but to prevent all *dissent* about them, than *simplicity*\*:—men may be said to understand any subject, when they agree, that they see all that can be seen of it at present by man.

9. Lastly, men are apt to have wrong views of the kind of task on which we now enter, in respect of the present *pleasure* which it may afford. There is nothing more interesting and affecting to man, than religion, when he is free from prejudices against it, and is rightly disposed†. Men who affect to be philosophers, hear the vulgar speak of things as known, which are not thoroughly understood, and, in order to avoid this, they run into notions ten times more unphilosophical, than any popular superstition‡. In order to be philosophers, they cease to be men: they lose the pleasures of the devout affections, and stop their ears to the voice of both reason and experience: ecclesiastical history does, to be sure, tell us of some who have made religion an instrument of ambition; but it seems to me to give us events and characters more interesting than profane, when seen with proper allowances; nay it sometimes describes actions so great, noble, and affecting, that it might supply the place even of romance and fiction itself. It is true indeed, that every

\* Dr. Balguy, p. 193. But his whole 8th Discourse is on Difficulties in Religion.

† See Dr. Powell's 3d Discourse; p. 44 and 45. "whither the pursuit itself tended, to virtue and to happiness."

‡ For instance, they hear men talk weakly about particular instances of *spirits*, and thence very unphilosophically conclude, that there are no intelligences between man and God, or none which influence the happiness of their fellow-creatures. A notion more unworthy of a true philosopher, than the most childish or the most anile superstition that ever was professed.

every pursuit, though undertaken merely for pleasure, will bring on disgust sometimes ; and if we are so capricious as to desist, the moment we cease to be entertained and attracted, we can succeed in nothing ; not even in painting, music, or games of skill. Principles of *duty*, and regard to plan and uniformity, must do their part now and then, even in attaining a pleasurable accomplishment : but, when we have acted a while from duty, pleasure will return.

With these views of the work before us, we may venture to undertake it.



## C H A P. II.

OF THE EXTENT OF THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH ; AND FIRST, OF ITS TWO PRINCIPAL SOURCES.

**T**HE first source of religious truth is reasoning on the *nature of God* ; the second is, studying the *scriptures*. How far the streams derived from these sources extend, it must be our next business to examine.



## C H A P. III.

OF THE MANNER OF ACQUIRING RIGHT NOTIONS  
OF THE NATURE OF GOD ; AND FIRST, OF REA-  
SONING A PRIORI.

1. **I**F any one required a brief account of what is meant by natural theology, and of the manner in which we actually acquire our ideas of the Supreme Being, some such answer as the following might be given.

We are so accustomed to *cause* and *effect*, that when we see an event, we cannot rest without ascribing it to some cause ; and the more important the event, the more anxious are we to account for it.

As the most important events are usually produced by *intelligent* beings within our knowledge, we are inclined to ascribe all important events to such beings, when their causes are unknown : and if the events are too difficult for *man*, we rise higher in the scale of intelligent causes. We feel our own impotence at every moment : we can provide nothing, we can hinder nothing : the united powers of man cannot stop a shower of rain, or raise a blade of grass. When we come to compare events, and to take them all into our minds at once, when we observe that there is an *unity* of design in them all, considered collectively, we ascribe them all ultimately to *one* great intelligence, and consider him as a *Person*. We next set about conceiving the particular *qualities* of this person ; and, when we have combined

bined them into one *character*, we trace out the marks of them; of wisdom, benevolence, power: thus familiarized, as it were, to this august person, we consider in what he is to be distinguished from man. We find ourselves under a necessity of giving his qualities *human names*: as these qualities are causes of similar effects with human qualities, and as man knows no others, all we can do is, to acknowledge that his qualities may in reality be very different in their kind from those which are called by the same names in man. Sometimes, we think how things could possibly be, without supposing a God always existing, and we find ourselves wholly at a loss to conceive a time when no Deity existed. This seems to contain every part of *natural theology*.

2. When we reason from cause to effect, we are said to reason *à priori*; when from effect to cause, *à posteriori*: it seems probable, that men have begun with the latter; nevertheless we will follow the customary order, which indeed is the most natural after the first analytical train of arguing has been pursued.

3. We are said to prove the existence of God *à priori*, when we shut our eyes to all the effects of his power, and consider only whether it is possible, in the nature of things, that there should not have existed from all eternity an independent being.

We reason in like manner concerning any particular *attribute*; as, whether from eternal existence and power, benevolence can be inferred, without our knowing of any instances of benevolence?

It may, perhaps, be doubted, whether this argument is strictly of the sort to which it pretends. We seem obliged to lay the foundation of it in our own existence; which seems to be an *effect*; and we seem obliged to mount upwards to see how our  
own



own existence is reconcileable with the idea of there having been at any time no God. This remark, though admitted, can only affect the *form*, and not the *validity* of the argument.

Dr. *Samuel Clarke* is the principal supporter of the argument *à priori*; how extensive the study of it may be made, will appear best from a perusal of his work and the controversies arising out of it. It seems as if Dr. Clarke might as well not have called his argument a demonstration; it has been observed\* that a matter of fact cannot be demonstrated, because it does not imply a contradiction to suppose a fact to have happened otherwise: also, that an infinite series of causes can have no prior cause. But supposing both these remarks to have weight, yet Dr. Clarke's argument may prevail, as to the *conclusion* aimed at; because the difficulties are less on his side than the opposite.

Dr. Kippis, in his life of Lardner, mentions a work of *Lowman*, "drawn up in the mathematical form, to prove the being and perfections of God *à priori*;"—which he does not allow to be convincing, though he thinks it as near demonstration as any thing of the kind.

\* Hume's Dial. on Nat. Relig. part 9.

## C H A P. IV.

## OF REASONING A POSTERIORI.

1. **W**E reason *à posteriori* on the being of God, when we consider the things of heaven and earth ; their qualities and uses ; and ask whether they could have been formed by chance, by a variety of beings, by an unwise or malevolent being.

2. It is easy to see how copious this source of religious knowledge is ; before it can be exhausted, we must be acquainted with all the phænomena of nature ; inanimate, instinctive, rational, moral :—the scheme and system of them, the laws to which they are subject ; the relation of each to every other, and to the whole :—we may safely pronounce this source inexhaustible. If any one felt a desire to extend his views, by examining a number of examples of what is here said, he need only have recourse to the works of *Derham*, his *Phyfico-theology*, and *Astro-theology* : or to any later and more improved accounts of the works of the creation.

3. Mr. *Hume* is the author of some *dialogues on natural religion*, published since his death, which may serve to shew the copiousness of *both* our methods of reasoning. He introduces *characters*, who urge many sceptical arguments against our argument *à posteriori*, which indeed may prevent its being misapplied ; but the result is, according to him, that there is no way but this of accounting for the phænomena of nature, that is intelligible, and determinate. — It seems as if much better answers might be given to his sceptical arguments, than he himself gives ; to attempt giving them



them here would detain us too long on a single point; such an attempt should make a separate work: we will content ourselves with a single instance. Near the end of Part I! I we find, “none of the *materials* of thought are in any respect similar in the human and in the divine intelligence;” hence we are to infer, that we have no right to say God is wise from his works, merely because it would require human wisdom to construct such works:—but suppose we take the reasoning of the Psalmist \*; “he that planted the ear shall he not hear?” must we say, that this is not good reasoning, because God cannot be said in an human sense to *hear*, he having no bodily ears?—whether we call his knowledge of our sounds *hearing*, or not, is insignificant; it is incredible that he should be *ignorant* of the effects of those organs which he has constructed. In like manner, we speak *truly* when we say, God is *wise*; and man can have no other way of expressing this truth; though it is right for him to be aware, that divine wisdom may differ as much from human, as divine hearing from human hearing. I say *may* differ, rather than *does* differ; the latter expression implies too little diffidence.

4. I fear the argument, in the essay of the same author *on Providence and a future State*, has done harm; it is such an attack on the truths which we are now considering, that I beg leave to take some notice of it. We cannot, says Mr. Hume, infer a perfect God from an imperfect world; we can infer nothing in the *cause* which we do not see in the *effect*. We cannot therefore reason from God’s *perfect* goodness, wisdom, &c. as if they had been fully established.—I would wish only to observe, that it is good *probable* reasoning, and such as we should use  
in

\* Psalm xciv.

in any important worldly affair, to find out God, in our way, and in our present state, *à posteriori*, and then to argue from his character, supposed perfect, to what may be expected from a perfect being.—The Alexandrian manuscript is a good one; how do we know that? from finding in it many good readings: a conjecture occurs about the manner of reading a certain clause; he who finds this MS. favor his conjecture, will think he proves it to be a right one; why? because it is a good manuscript.

If a man behaves well in several instances, I conclude that he is a man of good principles; then, if I want to judge how he would act in a doubtful case, I say, he is a man of good principles, and therefore he will behave well. This is a kind of reasoning, on which a prudent man would stake his most important interests; and therefore one, which may always be admitted as a ground of *action*.

I conclude by induction in settling the goodness of the man's *principles*; perhaps some actions of his appear, which I do *not fully understand*; but I must judge of these by such as I do understand; I shall do this with the greater readiness, if it is *unlikely* that I should understand them: in that case, it is highly probable, if I did understand them, that they would help towards the same conclusion.—Now it is infinitely unlikely, that we should understand all the acts of the *divine* government; but the instances of his benevolence multiply upon us as we improve in our knowledge of things, and therefore we ought to conclude, that he is benevolent in the instances which as yet we do not comprehend.—Let Mr. Hume deny this to be demonstration; to *act* against mere probable reasoning is madness: I cannot demonstrate, that there will be another harvest, but I must act as if I could.



5. Before we close our short discussions on natural religion, it seems proper to observe, that natural religion is presupposed in revealed. This observation is made, because some friends of Revelation seem to undervalue natural religion.—It may also be of use, as a standing apology, whenever we introduce topics and arguments of natural religion into our disquisitions on scripture. “He that cometh to God, must believe that he *is* ;” and must not only believe the existence of a Deity, but “that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Heb. xi. 6.—See also Rom. i. 19. &c.—Acts xiv. 17.—Acts xvii. 24.—Rom. iii. 29.

It seems to be taken for granted in scripture, that all good christians have availed themselves as much as possible of all kinds of notices from heaven ; not only with regard to religion, but also with regard to virtue. See the character of Cornelius ; Acts x. 22.—Rom. ii. 14. 15.—Ephes. vi. 1.

Nay, it seems as if the christian religion was of too improved a nature for those to be admitted into it, whose morals were very rude and uncultivated. But of this more hereafter, when we treat of the propagation of the gospel, and the need men have of revelation.

Except we settle previously our idea of God, we cannot prove the divinity of the Son or Holy Ghost: that is shewn by proving that each of those persons is spoken of as eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, and, in short, is possessed of all *divine attributes* \*.

\* See also in Ludlam's Essay on Satisfaction, p. 106, how natural religion is used, even by Hervey, in the doctrine of *Imputation*.

## C H A P. V.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES : AND FIRST, OF THE  
HEBREW LANGUAGE.

1. **W**E now pass on to the *second source* of religious truth ; the *sacred writings*.—Common people are apt to speak of the *bible* as of one book, almost as if it had been published at one time, and written by one author. But the least attention shews the great length of time between the first and the last publication :—the Pentateuch is said \* to have been written 1452 years before Christ, the year before the death of Moses : and the Revelation of St. John about † 97 years after Christ (after his birth) : in which time manners, government, languages, and knowledge had undergone great changes, and the divine dispensations had grown from almost a state of infancy, in some particulars, to a state of maturity.

2. But it will be best to divide these books into *classes*. There may be six of the old testament, and three of the new.

The first class is, the book of *Genesis* : this should make a class by itself, because it contains history of times before the dispensation of Moses, and describes manners so simple and unimproved, as to require separate and peculiar remarks. The second class consists of the books containing the *Law of Moses*, viz. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

\* Blair's Chronol. Tables.

† Lardner's Works, Vol. 6. p. 633.



mony. The third class consists of the *historical* books, giving an account of the various fortunes which befel the chosen people of God, from their oppression under the kings of Ægypt, to the re-establishment of the Jewish policy and re-building of the temple after the Babylonish captivity, from the year 1706 to the year 515 before Christ.—There are some abridgements, as it were, of these in the Acts of the Apostles. Chap. vii. and xiii.—The fourth class consists of the *prophetical* books. The fifth of the *moral*. The sixth of the *poetical*.

The first class of the books of the *New Testament* consists of the *Gospels* and *Acts* of the Apostles, which record the conduct and discourses of our Saviour, and of those who were first commissioned by him: the second class is made up of *letters* written to the newly-established churches, and a few distinguished individuals: and the prophetic book called the *Revelation*, constitutes the third class.

It must be owned, that these classes are not wholly distinct from one another: several of them contain prophecies, and the prophetical books contain history, and so on; but this imperfection is to be found in all classes that I recollect; and will occasion no confusion in the present instance, if we only apply observations on the prophetical *books* to such prophecies as are found in the Psalms, or in the book of Numbers:—and so of the other classes.

3. In a large sense we may say, the Old Testament is written in *Hebrew*; as that word may comprehend the Phœnician or Samaritan, (as far as concerns the Samaritan Pentateuch,) and the Chaldee. Of this language Dr. Powell says\*, (from bishop Chandler and others) that it “is neither clear nor copious,”  
that

\* Opening of Dis. 9.

that “it consists of a few words, used in a great variety of senses; and these senses often not connected, but by some minute and scarce discernible resemblance.” But, though he speaks of the prophecies, which have many difficulties besides that of the language, he adds, “the obscurity we complain of is such as should excite our industry, not lead us to despair of success.”—It does seem as if Christians did not study the Hebrew language sufficiently: though the Christian dispensation is intended to supersede the Jewish, yet they are only different parts of the same plan; every word that is said in the New Testament, is said to those that had Jewish ideas, and the allusions which we may call Hebrew allusions, are innumerable\*: and it is not only the sense of the New Testament, but the authenticity of it, which suffers by an ignorance of Hebrew. We cannot judge so well, whether prophecies have really been fulfilled, if we have not some understanding of the meaning of the prophecies, as we can with such assistance.—And the Old and New Testaments are knit together by an endless number of *ties*, the nature of which will not be thoroughly seen by one, who is *rudis atque hospes* in the original languages. Neither must we confine our views to the past; there is an unbounded field open before us for future improvements:—but, if we do not search for oriental knowledge, we shall fall far short of what might possibly be effected.

Dr. Jubb has used several good arguments in favor of the study of Hebrew, in a Latin speech, which he has printed, made at Oxford in 1780.

Dr. William Wotton has shewn, that the Talmud, or, more properly, the Misna †, is useful to Christians, as containing a very old traditional law of the

\* See Prologue to Ecclesiasticus.

† Wotton, Discourse 1, Chap. 7. Vol. 1. p. 80—101.



the Jews reduced to writing; as mentioning many things, which our Saviour, and those to whom he addressed himself, would have in their minds. He introduces a letter from Simon Ockley\*, Professor of Arabic in Cambridge in 1718, in which it is said, "If I had ever had an opportunity, I would most certainly have gone through the New Testament under a Jew,—they understand it infinitely better than we do," &c. Lightfoot, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* and *Talmudicæ*, has been of much use in the way we are speaking of; and he has been improved upon, I conceive, by *Scheetengenius*.—It is indeed surprising to think how ignorant of Hebrew some of the Greek fathers were †; the authority of the Septuagint must have occasioned it. Had the earliest fathers studied Hebrew, as Jerom did afterwards, we might have known much more of the application of that language to the New Testament, than we do at present ‡.

4. The *Samaritan Pentateuch* is to be considered as an original §; differing from the Hebrew only in characters; or in readings, as far as one MS. may differ from another. *Samaria* was a city, (though a region round it has the same name) once only the capital of the tribe of Ephraim, but afterwards made the capital of the *ten* tribes which separated from Judah and Benjamin: all twelve were carried captive into the East, into Assyria and the neighbourhood

\* Wotton's Preface to *Misna*,—end.

† Some instances, relating to Justin Martyr, &c. may be found in Pearson on the Creed, article 2d, not far from the beginning, about Joshua, Abraham, and Sarah.

‡ See Masclef, Vol. 2. defence, p. v. where it is said, that even *Philo* and *Josephus*, were *infantes* in Hebrew; from Capellus.

§ See Kennicott's *State of the Hebrew Text*, Vol. 1. 8vo. p. 337; and Du Pin's *Canon of the Old Testament* 5. 1. quoted by Kenicott, p. 338.

hood of Babylon; the *ten* above 100 years\* before the *two*; the ten having jointly taken the name of *Israel*, as the main body of the twelve tribes; the two, of *Judah*.—During the captivity, a colony was sent to inhabit the depopulated provinces near Samaria; this colony were *Cutheans*, and they were idolaters; a long time afterwards, an Israelitish priest was sent with the Samaritan Pentateuch (not other parts of Scripture) to re-establish the mosaic religion: this made a mixture of Judaism and idolatry†; especially as this colony adopted the religion of Moses, in some degree, as the religion of the *place*: then, an Israelitish priest married a daughter of a Pagan governor of Samaria (Sandballat); this governor built a temple on mount *Gerizim*‡, to rival the temple of Jerusalem, about 204 years after the return of the Jews; this rivalry produced a national hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans.

*Phœnicia* was one name of Canaan proper; the Phœnician language was therefore properly the language of the Hebrews before the captivity: and it is the same, which was afterwards called the *Samaritan*. Our present Hebrew is written in the Chaldee character, which the Hebrews got accustomed to, during a seventy years captivity in the country near Babylon, called sometimes Chaldea§.

To any one, who wishes to get a good idea of the Samaritans, I would recommend a Dissertation of Dr. Kennicott: the word *Gerizim* is in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Deut. xxvii. 4. where the Hebrew has *Ebal*;

\* Collyer's Sacred Interpreter. 1. 268.

† Well might Christ say (John iv. 22.) "Ye worship ye know not what."

A good account of this matter seems to be in *Beaufobre's Introduction* to the New Testament.

‡ For *Gerizim*, see Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 12.—See also Collyer, Vol. 1. p. 342, from Usher.

§ Lard. Works, Vol. 3. p. 415, quotes Cellar. Orb. Ant. T. 2. p. 755.



*Ebal*; Gerizim is by many supposed to be inserted by a pious fraud; but Dr. Kennicott has written to prove Gerizim the right reading\*. Some have thought the Samaritan Pentateuch now subsisting, to be only a *transcript* from our Hebrew; but I should think they differ too much for that; how much they differ may be seen in Dr. Kennicott's Bible: he puts the Samaritan Pentateuch in Hebrew characters, where it differs from the Hebrew, so that the Samaritan copy may easily be compared with the Hebrew: he says, the Samaritan Pentateuch should be "held very precious."—"Some places in the Hebrew Pentateuch will never be intelligible, nor others defensible, till corrected agreeably to the Samaritan †."—See also Kennicott's State of the Hebrew text, 2 Vols. 8vo.—Index: particularly Vol. I. p. 336, &c. where he quotes a good passage from Du Pin's Canon of the Old Testament 1. 5. 1.—I conclude this account with mentioning, that the Samaritan Pentateuch was quoted by the fathers, (in the 4th and 5th centuries, I think,) but then disappeared; and no MSS. of it were found till the 17th, when they seem to have been purchased in the the East. See Kennicott's State, &c. Vol. I. p. 339. 347.—Vol. II. p. 302, &c.

5. *Chaldee* may be considered as a dialect of the Hebrew; in the ‡ same characters with what we now call Hebrew, or very § nearly the same.—It is reckoned the original of the books of *Daniel* and *Ezra*; and of part of *Jeremiah*; though Dr. Kennicott || speaks of a MS. of Daniel and Ezra discovered at Rome in 1764 in Hebrew, which

\* State of the Hebrew text. Vol. 2. p. 20.—102.

† Dr. Kennicott's Ten annual accounts, p. 145.

‡ Masclef. Vol. 2. p. 1st. after preface.

§ Walton's Prolegomena.—But see Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon Εβραϊς.

|| Ten annual accounts, p. 74. See also Masclef's Grammar, Vol. 2. Argumenta, p. iii.

which seemed pure, and was probably ancient.— Chaldee is of great use for enabling us to read the Chaldee *Paraphrases*, which shew the sense put by the Jews on the words of scripture; and shew particularly on what passages they grounded their expectation of the *Messiah*.

Besides this Chaldee, there was the *Syriac*, or vulgar tongue of the Jews, which possibly might be\* a kind of *country* dialect.—In the capital, Jerusalem, it seems as if one might say, that Chaldee was spoken, when Syriac was spoken in Galilee; I suppose, in a large town the vulgar tongue might approach nearer to the written tongue, or proper language, than in the country; some have called the language *spoken* at Jerusalem in our Saviour's time, *Syro-Chaldaic* †. The shades of dialects are endless: and, in some places, many speak more languages than one; as the Welsh and Irish, the Scotch and Flemish. The Syriac is recommended, because our Saviour spoke it; and his Evangelists wrote down what he spoke; they might write in Greek, but their § ideas were Syriac; and therefore they of course used many Syriac idioms, and some words ||. The Syriac *characters* in time became different from the Chaldee, or what we now call Hebrew; but how and when, does not appear ‡. The chief thing is to conceive the Chaldee, brought from the East, as a language of the better sort, and therefore usually written; the Syriac, belonging to the province which the Jews left, and to which they returned, as a language of the more ordinary people, and therefore usually spoken; and the Greek, spreading as an universal language,

\* Brerewood, Chap. 9. might be read. See also Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, under Εἰσαίς.

† Masclef, Vol. 2. arg. p. iii. Macknight's Index.

§ Masclef's Grammar, Vol. 2. p. 114.

|| Wotton's Misna, Preface, p. xviii.

‡ Masclef, Ibid. p. 121.



language, and the language of the LXX : and these as ingredients mixed in different *proportions* in different places, and with different persons, in ways not now to be specified exactly.

6. After mentioning the language of the Old Testament, we should mention the *manner* of learning it. Michaelis affirms \*, that there is not one tolerable lexicon in the Hebrew language ; and perhaps there may not be one equal to the Greek Thesaurus of Henry Stephens, or the French dictionary of the Academy ; but the reason may be, because it is impossible to make such an one. Were there as many Hebrew as Greek books, (and the same of words) and were it equally practicable to ascertain or decypher Hebrew and Greek expressions, I doubt not but there would be as good an Hebrew lexicon as the Greek one now mentioned : but this is not the case. If we go to the bottom of the matter, each language is to be learnt by examining all the passages in which any word occurs.† But any one, who does this, will see what has been done in the same way by those who have gone before him. Lexicons and grammars consist of general observations deduced from a number of particular instances : the chief thing is, to hit off well the connexion of different senses of the same word, and their dependence on each other. The Hebrew words, which we have, are within any one's reach, and the chief difference between lexicographers seems to consist in arranging them. Mr. Parkhurst endeavours always, in his lexicon of Hebrew and English, to get a sense to the root, which has something in common with

\* Introd. Lect. Pref. p. xii. &c. quarto.

† A Chaldee Grammar is a set of general observations formed by reading the parts of Scripture, which are in Chaldee, (as also the Chaldee Paraphrases, &c.) and seeing what expressions and modes of orthography, &c. occur repeatedly.—This easily applies to a Lexicon.

with all the senses; so that the meaning shall rise, like the sap in vegetables, immediately into the principal branches, and from them into the smaller ones. Buxtorf has published a small lexicon, which is well adapted to common use; and has the points: Cardinal Passionei has published a large one with points, in two Vols. folio, which saves the investigation of the root: and John Taylor's Hebrew concordance should be mentioned; but there is such a connexion between the different Oriental tongues, that I should recommend some of those lexicons that contain more than mere Hebrew; as Schindler's Pentaglotton, or Castellus's (Castle's) Heptaglotton: how melancholy! that so worthy and learned a man as Castle should injure his sight, and ruin his fortune, by such a work!

There is a lexicon made by *John Buxtorf, jun.* for the purpose of explaining the *Chaldee* Paraphrases and the *Syriac* Version of the New Testament; Basil, 1622; a well-printed book; but it has often failed me, when I thought I had reason to expect information from it.

As to *grammars*, I know none more to be recommended than Masclef's\*, as it gives rules for the Chaldee, Syriac, and Samaritan, as well as for what is commonly called Hebrew. He is entirely for banishing points, which suits my judgment, as far as I can form one; for they seem to embarrass more than they elucidate; and they seem to want authority. Parkhurst's grammar is without points, and very commodious: as is also *Wilson's*, which I think I should recommend upon the whole to the English reader, for mere Hebrew; especially as Masclef's is scarce.

What has been already said may give us some  
idea

\* Masclef was a native of Amiens, and canon of the cathedral there; died 1728, æt. 66.



idea of the history of the Hebrew, which is more properly the history of the Oriental tongues. The Samaritan, or Phœnician, is said to be the same with the old *Punic*, of which we have some specimens \* in Plautus, and some of the christian fathers: the Phœnicians were famous for trading voyages, and might make some community of language with the Carthaginians, who, in their turn, visited Tyre. Farther to the East was the Chaldee; the Jews adopted that, and mixed it with what they had before; possibly such mixture might degenerate into the Syriac. To the south of Palestine are the Arabic, the Æthiopic, and the Coptic, or language of the ancient Ægyptians, called the *Cophiti*. The inscriptions at Palmyra are not yet, I believe, understood. John David Michaelis in 1750 began† an history of these languages, and an attempt to trace out their connexion and their variations; such a work might throw light on the Old Testament, and be the ground of a better lexicon than has yet been published.

The history of the *English* language would include accounts of the British, Saxon, Norman, &c.

7. *Rabbinical* Hebrew is much nearer to Chaldee than to pure Hebrew, but somewhat different from Chaldee: besides that it has words borrowed from the nations where Jews have resided; new customs and ideas require new words; and it is more obvious to make some use of the words one hears, than to invent perfectly new ones ‡. Schindler gives Rabbinical words, and so does Buxtorf;—and  
Buxtorf

\* Plautus, *Pænulus*, Act 5. Scene 1. “Hanno loquitur Punicæ.”

† See Pref. to his Lectures on the New Testament, near the end. Quarto.

‡ The *Talmud* belongs to this; and the *Massora*; for Talmud. see Wotton's *Misna*; for *Massora*, see Buxtorf's *Tiberias*; and Talmud is mentioned B. 4. Art. 6. of this.

Buxtorf has written a Rabbinical dictionary in folio, and a grammar which shews the Rabbinical character, a sort of written hand, differing in different parts of Europe, and a Bibliotheca, (in his abbreviations); Reland's *Analec̃ta* \* contains an *Isagoge*; Bartolucci † has published a large Bibliotheca; and Pococke is celebrated in this, as well as other parts of oriental learning.

8. The *fewness* of Hebrew books is to be lamented; for there is no making good dictionaries and grammars without a great number of instances. Fewer books have been written and more destroyed in Hebrew, than in any other language. Masclef affirms, that no Hebrew book appears to have been written for 600 years together; from the first book of Maccabees to the *Misna*; the reading of which in the synagogues is forbidden by Justinian in 548; and that prohibition is the first authentic record of its existence. He also affirms, as was lately mentioned, that Philo and Josephus could not write Hebrew tolerably ‡. I suppose, he reckons the Chaldee Paraphrases not Hebrew §: after the *Misna* was published, it is agreed, that many commentators upon it started up: and, since that time, many Rabbis have written, as appears by the *Bibliothecæ*: but there has been an unfortunate rivalry between Jews and Christians; which caused Gregory || the 9th to burn twenty cart-loads of Hebrew

\* Reland, a Dutchman, professor at Utrecht, died 1719, æt 43.

† Bartolucci died 1687, a monk; professed Hebrew at Rome.

‡ See Masclef's *Novæ Grammaticæ Argumenta*. Vol. 2. p. v. &c.

§ Masclef. ib. "Hebraice; quod de Syro-chaldaico idiomate non potest intelligi."—"Hebrea potuit a Chaldaicis aut Syriacis distinguere," viz. Hieronymus, p. iii, iv.—See note at the end of this Chapter.

|| Chambers's Dict.. Gregory the 9th died in 1241. Innocent the 4th died in 1254.



Hebrew Books; Innocent the 4th is said to have joined in the destruction of this kind of learning: it seems as if they did harm to Christianity, though not so much as if the books had been written sooner. We have more reason to lament the books, which \* probably were written soon after the return from the Babylonish captivity, and were destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes †, or in the time of Titus, or in the persecution of Adrian.

What has been said, in this chapter, must not be thought to pretend to remove all doubts and disputes: it is only meant to put the student on a footing with the generality of divines, and to point out subjects of farther inquiry, with regard to the original language of the Old Testament. We might, at every point of our journey, turn to the right hand or to the left, if we pleased, and expatiate as far as we pleased; but we must remember the length of the journey, which we have to perform.

\* Prologues to Ecclesiasticus.

† Bishop Chandler's Introd. p. xiv. Antiochus Epiphanes, Collyer, Vol. 1. p. 97. he died 164 years before Christ.

In determining the sense of the word *Hebrew*, it may always be well to observe to what it is *opposed*: expressly or tacitly: when opposed to *Greek*, Latin, &c. it is a *generic* term, including Chaldee, &c;—when opposed to Chaldee, &c. it has a more confined meaning. So the word *Man* sometimes means all human *kind*; and yet is sometimes the term to distinguish one part of human kind from another. At one time it includes what at another it excludes.

*Lewis's* Hebrew Antiquities might be mentioned to the Student either here, or in Chap. X.

## C H A P. VI.

## OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE.

I. **G**REEK is always popularly called the original language of the New Testament; (and therefore we mention the New Testament before the Septuagint, which is only a translation;) but this has been thought, especially by many ancient Christians, not to be strictly and universally true. We must think, therefore, why we esteem it such. It is something, that we have the Greek as the original; to *us* at least it is so, and must be treated accordingly; we can approach no nearer. But moreover, we find the books of the New Testament quoted in Greek, and very early; and, if we consider circumstances, it is likely, that the Evangelists and Apostles should chuse Greek in preference to Hebrew; or at least to write Greek Originals, whether they wrote Hebrew ones or not. Greek was understood by most people, even in Judea, and the Gospel was to be preached\* to “all nations;” Greek was the most general language; the epistle to the *Romans* is not written in the Roman language, though written within their empire, and to inhabitants of their capital. If Philo and Josephus† had reasons for chusing to write in Greek, if Hebrew was translated into Greek for the use of Jews, why might not the first publishers of the Gospel use the Greek language? there is no general presumption against it.

But

\* The extent of the Greek language is shewn in Brerewood, Chap. 1.

† Josephus first wrote his *Jewish War* in the language of his own country, and afterwards published it in Greek;—Lard. Works, Vol. 7. p. 35. from Josephus’s Prol. sect. 2.



But it has been always allowed, that all the New Testament was originally in Greek, except St. *Matthew's* gospel, and the epistle to the *Hebrews*; therefore arguments may be used peculiar to them. — And, if so many books were in Greek, why not all? — perhaps it may be said, because some should be in Hebrew for the use of the lower people: yet the Evangelists were of the common people, and they understood Greek (three at least) well enough to write it: below their rank, perhaps, pure Hebrew would not have been much better understood in our Saviour's time by any, who could be deemed readers of the books in question. — Syriac would have\* been necessary; and a Syriac version there was very early. — If there ever was an Hebrew original, it was probably rather for those who were *attached* to Hebrew (against innovations and foreign fashions) than for the lowest ranks of people; and how came it so much neglected? who translated it into Greek? i. e. made what the church has generally taken as an original? Both St. *Matthew's* gospel and the epistle to the *Hebrews* have much the appearance and ease, and the harmony, numbers, and rhetorical figures of originals †. It seems to have been prejudice, which made men first fancy it was likely these two books should be first written in Hebrew; and thence conclude, that they were so. Whoever wishes to see these and other arguments well stated, may consult the Supplement to Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*.

The utmost, which it seems possible to allow to the favourers of the opinion, that St. *Matthew's* gospel was first written in Hebrew, is, that there might possibly be *two originals*, one in Greek, another

\* With regard to this, consider, as before, what Parkhurst says under ΕΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ; and the remarks offered in the preceding Chapter.

† See Beaufobre's Pref. to *Hebr.* quoted by Lardner, *Works*, Vol. 4. p. 268: where are other good authorities. See also Limborch on *Acts* vi. 1.

ther in some kind of Hebrew : as we have two originals of our \* thirty-nine Articles, and of Sir Isaac Newton's Optics. Indeed, this supposition accounts for some expressions of the ancients very well. What right the favourers of such opinion have to our attention, will appear from what follows.

2. In early times of Christianity, there was such a book as the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*, sometimes called *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*; sometimes, *The Gospel according to the twelve* † :—indeed, there were a great number of gospels of different sorts, but this is particularly mentioned here, because it was afterwards imagined by some, to have been the original gospel of St. Matthew.—What it really was, cannot perhaps be ascertained beyond all power of doubting: therefore *we* must not dwell on the subject: what seems most probable is this; it was an history of the acts and sayings of Christ, in some kind of Hebrew, taken chiefly from St. Matthew, but with things added from some of the other Evangelists, and with still more particulars than they mention, known by tradition probably, for the use of the lowest orders of the people ‡.

3. The *Septuagint* § is a copious subject. We must endeavour to select what will give us the best idea of it, without entering into minutiae.

Alexander the Great died 324 years before Christ: four of his generals shared his dominions ||; Ptolemy, surnamed Soter (Savior) had Ægypt: ere long, he tried to extend his dominions; he attacked him  
who

\* The Countess of Rosenberg has written in French and English, and says, that they are equally original. Josephus was mentioned in this section.

† Lard. Credib. Index, Gospel. Fragments are preserved by Grabe. See also Jeremiah Jones.

‡ This is Lardner's opinion; Works, Vol. 6. p. 64.

§ Encyclopédie, *Septante*.

|| Collyer's Sacred Interpreter, Index, Septuagint.



who had got Syria, but found opposition from the fidelity and loyalty of the Jews; one sabbath day, he contrived to get the better of them, and transported several colonies of them into Ægypt, into the neighbourhood of Alexandria chiefly, to the amount, it is said, of an hundred thousand men. His son, Ptolemy, surnamed *Philadelphus*, succeeded him, 283 years before Christ; he was a lover of literature, and formed, and dedicated with great magnificence, under Demetrius Phalereus, as his librarian, the famous library of Alexandria, consisting of two hundred thousand volumes. About this time, (about 280 years before Christ), or perhaps \* rather later, the Hebrew Bible was, in fact, translated into Greek. The translation has the name of the *Septuagint*, or the version of the *seventy*, from a notion, that Ptolemy procured six of each Jewish tribe to make it; twelve times six amounts to seventy-two, and sometimes this is called the version of the *seventy-two*, but more commonly the number two is neglected: some wonderful stories are told of these translators being shut up in separate cells, and bringing out the very same translation to an iota, in two days; or in seventy-two; but no learned man supports these stories now, I think, if we may except Isaac Vossius†. Mill thinks, that the approbation of a council of Jews, consisting of about seventy, gave the Septuagint its name. (beg. of pref.) Prideaux‡ thinks the translation was made at the request of the Alexandrian Jews; possibly their request, and Ptolemy's turn for literature, and desire to suit the Jews, might jointly occasion it §.

On

\* Ladvocat under Ptol. Philad. says 271.

† See Pref. to Mill's LXX, 12<sup>mo</sup>. 3d page.

‡ Connexion 2. 1. quoted p. 347. Collyer, Vol. 1.

§ For the contents of Aristæus's account of this translation of the Bible, as well as of the account of Justin Martyr, &c. see the Pre-

On the *authority* of this translation, men have been divided; the Jews of late have reckoned it despicable; though Josephus seems to venerate it: Isaac Vossius \* has reckoned it divine: these are the extremes: some middle opinion would come nearest the truth. Dr. Kennicott, in his State of the Hebrew text, has several good remarks upon it scattered about, and he has quoted several good opinions of others:—he mentions one instance, where this version is right, and both the Hebrew and Samaritan † wrong; it differs from our Hebrew in a very great number ‡ of passages; and probably was translated from copies, which differed much from ours: it has now itself many various § readings, in the different copies of it; but, supposing the right readings of it ascertained, I should think that it ought to be allowed to correct our Hebrew, as well as our Hebrew to correct || it: the genuine reading ought to be investigated by comparing them. Jerom ¶ seems perplexed with it, but it stood in his way, when he wanted to make a translation from certain Hebrew MSS. into Latin. There seems not to have been any unity, either of person

Preliminaria to Montfaucon's edit. of Origen's Hexapla, Cap. 3. Aristæus (Montfaucon calls him Aristeas, Josephus Ἀρισταίος,) was the name of an officer in the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus; so some one probably forged an history under his name. Saying this, is not affirming, that there are no true facts in the history under the name of Aristæus.—See Pref. to Mill's Septuagint. Josephus (Ant. 12. 2.) has a long chapter on this subject, telling many particulars; but they have not a credible appearance: some speak of Aristæus's work as genuine. It is inserted in the Bibliothecæ Patrum.

\* Wotton's Misna, Pref. p. ix. &c.

† I. p. 549. ‡ p. 284.

§ P. 211. 1788, Mr. Holmes is now about collating the MSS.

|| See Sir I. Newton's Chronology, p. 343; quoted Kennicott's State, &c. Vol. 2. p. 337.

¶ Kennicott's State, Vol. I. p. 211.



person or plan, in making this version, if we may judge from different ways of spelling the same name \*, and from different ways of rendering the very same phrase, in passages very near to each other.

The importance of this version is reckoned great by most moderate men; it was made before the Jews were prejudiced † against Jesus as the Messiah; it was the means of preparing ‡ the world at large for his appearance. There is a preface signed I. P. (the initials of Bishop Pearson's § name) to a Cambridge edition of the Septuagint, printed in 1665, which gives an account of many other advantages, (I will read you the last paragraph); and Dr. Hody's judgment seems candid ||.—Michaelis reckons the best edition of the LXX. to be Breitinger's: references are made, by Dr. Kennicott, to the Complutensian, and that of Aldus; and to the Vatican and Alexandrian manuscripts. The Cambridge edition of 1665 is printed after the Vatican MS.

4. It may seem extraordinary, that our Saviour and the sacred writers of the New Testament should quote the translation of the LXX rather than the Hebrew; for so they are said to have done. "Almost all the passages of the Old Testament," introduced into the Epistle to the Hebrews, and they are very numerous, are "quoted according to the seventy †, not according to the Hebrew"—It is how-

\* Ken. 197. Vol. 1.

† Ken. 276. Vol. 1.

‡ Collyer 1. 347.

§ Bishop Pearson was the person meant. See Biographia Britannica, under *Pearson*. On the Creed, p. 491. 1st edit. (on descent into hell) Bishop Pearson says, "many additional patches have been in that Translation," meaning the LXX. This sentence is not in some later editions of Pearson.

|| Quoted in Kennicott, Vol. 1. p. 545.

† Beaufobre's Pref. to Hebr. transl. by Lardner, Works, Vol. 4. p. 269.

however said, that rather the sense of the Septuagint is followed than the words \*, though our Testament is in the same language. Supposing the truth of this, two ideas may be here mentioned; 1. The Hebrew copies in use, at the first publication of christianity, might be more like those, from which the LXX had translated, than our present copies are. And this idea will appear less strange, if we attend to "*almost* all," in the passage now quoted; and to the *words* of a Greek Translation not being followed in a Greek Book. 2. The Greek Language might be so much the *general* language, and the version of the LXX might be so much known, that it might be more likely to answer the purpose of quotation to quote from the LXX, than to quote from the Hebrew: the arguments, built upon quotations, would not be weakened by such choice. The knowledge of Greek did descend to low ranks; to men of ordinary mechanic trades; such were the Apostles;—how far quotations from *pure* Hebrew, differing much from the Greek, would have been entered into, I do not clearly see; but they would not have been so extensively useful as those from the Greek.

But it may be proper to mention, that Dr. Randolph and Mr. Street † think it cannot be generally affirmed, that Christ and his Apostles did quote from the LXX.

My own idea is, that we do not enter quite enough into the circumstances of this case. Christ and his Apostles would have no *nicety* in *quoting* the Old Testament; all they would want, would be to *refer* their hearers to it, for some particular purpose: they could not falsify; the Books were at hand. I should think, therefore, reference would  
be

\* Collyer, 1. p. 347.

† See Preface to Mr. Street's Translation of the Psalms, p. xv—xviii.



be made easily and freely, according to the notions or reading of the persons addressed at any particular time. To a Jew who was accustomed to the LXX, the LXX would be quoted; to one who had traditional modes of interpreting, those modes would be adopted. (See Allix, Unitarians, Chap. ii, iii, iv; and Bp. Chandler's Defence, Chap. iv, and v, and vi.) Hence, little can be built, in the way of general observation, on the quotations which occur; they leave us still to get the best sense we can from all copies and versions taken together.

5. The *peculiarities* of the Septuagint are such as might be expected from a Jew's writing of Jewish matters, belonging to common life, in the Greek language. That is, Greek *words*, combined into Jewish *idioms*; and sometimes transferred or borrowed, to express things unknown amongst the Grecians.—If I wanted to give, in Sweden for instance, a notion of Addison's delicate humor, I could not do it in English, because I should not be understood; nor in Swedish, because I know not the language myself; but *French* is a general language; I could translate Addison into French, but it would have Anglicisms in it, on two accounts; because I was an Englishman, and because the ideas of Addison were English; and of that ordinary familiar sort, in which all nations differ from each other. The peculiarities then of the Septuagint are, in short, Oriental idioms and ideas.—One thing, which makes this more attended to, is, that the Greek of the LXX naturally became the Greek for expressing the things of Religion, and so the Greek of the New Testament\*.

6. The expression *Hellenistic Greek* seems strange, because all Greek must be Hellenistic in some sense.

But

\* Syriac words, idioms and ideas in New Testament, see in Wotton's *Misna*. Pref. p. xviii.

But all dispersed Jews, including those of Alexandria though settled there, who forgot their own \* language, and got to talk Greek familiarly and habitually, would be *Hellenists*, and every thing they did would be called Hellenistic; if Jews affected Grecian manners, they might be called † *Hellenists*, as might Greeks who turned Jews:—there would, in this way, be Hellenistic customs, dress, amusements, &c.—and, if Hellenists spoke a peculiar kind of Greek, it would be called Hellenistic Greek.—This Hellenistic Greek I conceive to be the language of Philo, if not of Josephus; and his writing Hellenistic Greek is one principal reason, I fancy, why his language is of importance to Christians.—Parkhurst mentions κτισω in the sense, to create, as being Hellenistic. The Authors of the Apocryphal Books, Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees ‡, are called “Hellenizing Jews.”—Pearson on the Creed: p. 127. Fol. (note on, θεος is not θελημα θεου.)

We see now what it is to *understand Greek* with a view to the Sacred Books;—it is to understand the Greek tongue in its purity, to understand the Oriental idioms mixed with it; and the manner in which they are mixed; the proportion of the several ingredients.

7. It may be as well here, as any where else, to make some mention of those *Translators* of the Old Testament, who lived after our Saviour.—I shall make use of *Montfaucon's Preliminaria* to Origen's Hexapla; attempting only to mention what seems most probable, without making any decision of my own, in matters of so much uncertainty.—Symmachus

\* See Limborch on Acts vi. 1.

† Look at Dict. Acad. Française: that Dict. gives *Hellenists* four senses. 1. Alexandrian Jews. 2. The Jews, who spoke the language of the LXX. 3. The Jews, who accommodated themselves to Grecian manners. 4. The Greeks, who embraced Judaism.

‡ Taylor says, this book is in Hellenistic Greek;—on Romans, Key, p. 121, bottom.



machus comes first in the Syllabus; perhaps because he has been most applauded by the Fathers, as an Interpreter; but I will now follow the *usual* order.

*Aquila* is said to have been a Jew, of Pontus: an enemy to Christianity: scrupulously adhering to the Hebrew Copies; even so as to make his own expressions sometimes more obscure than the Hebrew itself. The Jews, on this account perhaps, reckon him the most accurate of all the Interpreters. Christians say, that he has distorted some passages, particularly some Prophecies relating to the Messiah.

Some have thought *Aquila* the same with *Onkelos*, (Brerewood, Chap. 9.) but the paraphrase of Onkelos differs much from the version of *Aquila*; though the same person *might* be called by those two names.

*Symmachus* is said to have been a Samaritan, and to have lived under Severus. He was probably an Ebionite, that is, a sort of Christian. He was a man of abilities, and of taste, much praised by the ancients. He wrote such Greek as not to seem harsh to a Grecian. His translation is free, in comparison of *Aquila's*: and gives generally a rational sense. Indeed, if he had a fault, it was giving a rational sense, when he did not thoroughly understand his original: this was, not submitting to own, that a passage was unintelligible to him.

*Theodotion* seems to have been an unbelieving Jew, of Ephesus, under Commodus, and therefore, to have lived before *Symmachus*. He is remarkable for having followed the LXX very strictly: so that when the LXX fails, his version is looked upon as supplying the defect. Yet he sometimes seems to follow *Aquila*.

In Origen's Hexapla, we have, in some places, a fifth, sixth, and seventh Interpreter; but so little is known about these, that I will content myself with barely mentioning them.

## C H A P. VII.

OF THE MANNER, IN WHICH THE SACRED WRITINGS WERE PUBLISHED, BEFORE THE ART OF PRINTING WAS KNOWN.

1. **T**HE Art of printing was not invented till the 15th Century; till about 1440 or 1450. The sacred Books therefore must, before the discovery of this Art, appear in *Manuscript*:—written by persons, who made writing books their sole occupation. The written copies of the whole or part of the Scriptures are mostly handsome, on vellum, or cotton paper, some finely illuminated, but frequently worn, and difficult to be read, though, in many, the difficulty goes off much sooner than is at first expected.—They are dispersed unequally through the world; Ecclesiastical History teaches us where to expect the most: many are of little value; some are very precious; the latter are known like famous men, and have characters peculiar to themselves respectively, which characters it is a part of learning to know.

It is natural, to ask after the *Originals* of the Books of scripture, written by the inspired Penmen themselves: most men are agreed, that these Autographs do not exist: a Gospel of St. Mark is shewn as his Autograph at Venice, where he is the Patron Saint; but unfortunately it is not settled, whether the Characters are Greek or Latin\*.

2. Let no one be discouraged at this; the Author of *Nature* may be nevertheless the Author  
of

\* Michaelis Sect. 12. 4to.



of the Gospel; as we are left to take the bad consequences of the carelessness of Mankind in the things of Nature, so are we in the dispensations of Grace. No objection can arise from hence to the Divine *Authority* of the sacred Books.

Those who are discouraged by human accidents happening to the sacred writings, seem to mistake the nature of what is called a particular Providence. Providence may guide each particular event, and yet Man have only a general belief that it does so. It is one thing (and a very reasonable thing) to have such a belief: it is another, and a very different one, to think that we can point out, how such particular Providence is to employ itself on any occasion.

3. For the *age* of MSS, we may look at Dr. Kennicott's State of the Hebrew Text: Vol. I. p. 307. or ten Annual Accounts, p. 144 \*.—The old ones are a continued *series of Letters*, sometimes of the same size and at the same distance, without any divisions, so much as into words, without any points, or with very few; and therefore they afford room for perpetual study and improvement. Ends of lines there must be. Lines sometimes contained a certain number of Letters, and were called  $\sigma\iota\chi\omicron\iota$  †; sometimes a set of words expressing a meaning in some degree separate, and such lines are called ‡  $\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ .—The ancients have left us *Stichometries*, by which name they call Catalogues of the canonical Books,

\* I wish it had been the custom to say *when* a MS was probably written, instead of saying it is so many years *old*. Lard. Works, 5. 252. does talk of the Alexandrian being written in the 4th or 5th Century; and so does Dr. Woide. Dr. Powell expresses it p. 65. "some of them, as is probable, have been preserved more than a thousand years."

†  $\Sigma\tau\iota\chi\omicron\varsigma$  seems to mean a *Row* of any thing; men, trees, words.

‡ Michaelis, Quarto, Sect. 36 and 45. See Simon's Crit. Hist. last Chap. (p. 180.)

Books, with the number of verses contained in each \*. The *Masora* of the Jews answered this same purpose.—In the year 396, St. Paul's Epistles were divided into Lessons or Chapters. In 490 †, an Edition was first published with Lessons, Chapters and Verses. Our kind of verses were invented by Robert Stephens in 1551 ‡. They are useful for finding passages, but Mr. Locke advises us to neglect them all, when we want to find the real scope of any part of Scripture.

4. Mr. Casley's Preface to his Catalogue of MSS in the King of England's Library, may be read with profit by any one, who wishes to pursue this part of Literature. And *Wetstein's* Introduction to his New Testament.— ||

5. It may be proper to take an *instance* or two of MSS;—first, let us take the *Alexandrian*. It is in four Volumes, of such a size as to be called sometimes Folio, sometimes § Quarto; the three first contain the Old Testament, in the version of LXX; the 4th, the books of the New Testament, but not quite complete. The age of it is not entirely agreed upon; it *might* be written in or near the 5th Century: it was probably written in Ægypt; possibly at Alexandria, where they used to write remarkably well. According to tradition, it was written by a noble Ægyptian Lady, named *Thecla*, soon after the Council of Nice. So says an inscription

\* Lard. Works, Vol. 5. p. 258.

† Michaelis. Sect. 45. Quarto.

‡ In the last chapter of Simon's Critical History, are several things to our present purpose: at one time, St. Matthew was said to contain 68 *titles* and 355 chapters: and so of the rest. Names are arbitrary.

|| Consult also Kennicott. Dr. Woide. Lardner's Indexes. Simon's Critical History of the New Testament.

§ Dr. Woide says it used to be folio. and Sir Thomas Roe calls it "a large Book;" but the margin has been cut, so as, I think, to take off the contents of Chapters, &c.



tion of Cyrillus Lucaris, to whom this nation was indebted for it. He, removing from the Patriarchate of Alexandria to that of Constantinople, took it with him: he had been in several parts of Europe \*, and favoured the Reformed Religion. Pope Urban viii, at that time making a strong effort to reunite the Roman and Greek Churches, Cyril opposed the union, and wished to make one between the Greek Church and the Reformed; he was afterwards put to death, through the intrigues of the see of Rome, by the Emperor of the Turks, for Treason. He seems to have been a man of an enlarged mind †. His good-will to the Reformed appears by Letters now published; he was strongly supported by the English Ambassador, and he might probably think, that the Scriptures had best be lodged where all men were Christians, and where Christianity was reformed: However that was, he gave, when Patriarch of Constantinople, the Alexandrian MS to King Charles the first of England, about the year 1628, through his friend Sir Thomas Roe, the English Ambassador. It was in the Royal Library (and is mentioned as there by Mr. Casley), till the King gave it to the British Museum, where it is now lodged. Mill, Grabe, Walton, Wetstein, in their several Prolegomena, have spoken of this MS, but the description of it is now become less necessary by Dr. Woide's having published a fac simile of the 4th Volume, or New Testament, which I am able to shew you.—Dr. Woide's preface shews how much this one MS may be made a Man's Study ‡.

It

\* Mosheim. Index.

† His History by Thomas Smith in his Miscellanies, probably might be worth reading: Sir Thomas Roe's Negotiations, I think, are: Smith calls him a Martyr.

‡ The Order of the parts of N. T. in the Alexandrian Copy seems

If any one has curiosity about the famous *Cambridge* MS, given to the University by Theodore Beza, he will, ere long, be able to see \* a fac simile of that; and mean time may read a short account of it in Michaelis's *Introd. Lect. Sect 25.* and a longer one in Du Pin and Simon's *Critical History*, and in the *prolegomena* of Mill and Wetstein. "It contains the Gospels and the Acts, together with an ancient Latin Version."—Lardner speaks † unfavourably of it.

seems best conceived this way;—Gospels, Acts, General Epistles (of James, Peter, John)—Epistles to particular Churches, ending with Hebrews;—Epistles to individuals, Timothy, Titus, Philemon;—Apocalypse.—Though, to be sure, the 2d and 3d. Epistles of John are joined to the first; and the Hebrews were not a particular Church.

\* This fac simile has been now (1796) published some time, and has been increasing in value ever since its publication.

† Lard. Works, Vol. 3. p. 157.



## C H A P VIII.

## OF VARIOUS READINGS.

WE have lost the originals of the sacred Books; and not only so, but those MSS which we have, differ from each other in many particulars: and there is no authority to decide which is right.

1. Some persons seem to have denied the Fact; formerly as to the whole Scripture (Kennicott's Gen. Diff. end of Hebr. Bible) but of late only as to the Old testament. They assert what they call the *Integrity of the Hebrew Text*;—but it seems rather difficult to understand, how copies can differ from each other, and none of them be corrupt: it seems as if all but one must be so, nay possibly that one also.—And it seems equally difficult to understand, how any learned man can get any Copy, which he can reckon the only right one:—a common person reads his Bible, and has no idea of any other copy besides that which he reads; but a learned man must know \*, that copies of the best character differ considerably from each other.

It seems, however, right to mention this notion of the Integrity of the Hebrew Text; and that it was maintained in 1753; yet not *all* who favor the notion, hold that the Jews † never transcribed wrong: some only say never *considerably* wrong:  
Dr.

\* Our present Hebr. Bibles, Kennicott says, are from the latest and worst MSS, and from the Edit. of Ben Chaim in 1525. Ann. Accounts, p. 25. 143.

† Kennicott's State, Vol. 1. p. 9. 237. 264. 236.

Dr. Kennicott set out with this Opinion \*, or prejudice: Wolfius, Buxtorf, Pococke, are perhaps the most respectable of those individuals, who have given into this way of thinking; and it seems as if in Switzerland the Candidates for Orders were obliged to subscribe to this Integrity.—But we have names of equal weight on our side; Mede, Lowth, Capell, &c.—A good account of them is to be found in Dr. Kennicott's General Dissertation, at the end of his Bible.—This error seems to turn, as that about decay of Manuscripts lately mentioned, on a presumption, that a particular Providence must guard things really sacred.

Nevertheless, if we think of the matter, we must say, that naturally, the oftener any work is transcribed, the more mistakes there will be in it: therefore naturally many more mistakes must be in the copies of the Old Testament than in those of the New. Shall we then presume to estimate supernatural Protection? as far as we are able to do so, we must say, that the New Testament is as likely to have a perpetual miracle wrought in its favor, as the Old. Jews indeed might not allow this; but some Jews † confess, that there are errors in Hebrew Copies of the Bible; and, when they correct any copies, they tacitly own the same thing. The *Keri* seem ‡ nothing but various readings; and the Masorites || themselves do not deny it.

It would carry us too far to dwell on particular instances of faults in MSS of the Old Testament; Dr. Kennicott has mentioned several, in his State of the Hebrew Text: the Student may examine that in Psalm xvi. 10.—That relating to the time of the Hebrews dwelling in Ægypt:—Exod. xii. 40.  
—and

\* Annual Accounts. p. 7.

† Ken. p. 246.

‡ See Kennicott's State, &c. Vol. 2. p. 482. from Jablonski.

|| Kennicott's State, &c. Index, Integrity.



—and the account of 600 various readings in the thanksgiving Ode of David, recorded 2 Sam. \* xxii. and Psalm xviii: which last will give an idea of the manner of getting at the true text, by a comparison of several faulty Copies.—For what is done in one Ode or Song, may be done in the whole Old Testament.

Bp. Warburton, in his “ Doctrine of Grace,” treats this notion of the Integrity, &c. as superstitious. (p. 42 ) The *Orobio* there mentioned was a Spanish Jew, who pretended to be a Christian, of the Romish Church; he was cotemporary with Limborch, and had a friendly controversial conference with him; which is much commended by Bp. Warburton, in his Directions for studying Divinity.

2. Having spoken of the Fact, that there *are* various readings, not only in the New Testament but in the Old, we will take an Instance of one person who has collected various readings in the former, and of one who has collected them in the latter; Dr. Mill, and Dr. Kennicott;—premising only this definition; (Ken. 1. 272.) *varia est lectio, ubicunque variè legitur*; in word or letter; or in the relative placing of the same word or letter.

Dr. *Mill* † collected no less than 30,000 different readings in the New Testament: as appears from his Prolegomena to his Edition of the Greek Testament, published in Folio at Oxford 1707. The work took him 30 years ‡: And to these, additions have been made by Kuster, Bengelius, &c. Mill collated about 112 MSS ||.

Dr.

\* Kenn. State &c. Vol. 1. p. 218. 397. and Vol. 2. p. 565 &c. and compare Kenn. Annual Accounts. p. 18.

† Of Queen's Coll. Oxf. died in 1707.

‡ Kenn. Annual—p. 157.

|| Dr. Kennicott's Annual Account for 1769. *Ten Ann. Accts.* p. 165.

Dr. *Kennicott* began to collate Hebrew MSS of the Old Testament under the protection of the publick in 1760; but, more strictly, he began his *work* in 1751, as he tells us at the opening of his general dissertation, at the end of his Bible; and he collated till 1770: he passed other ten years or more, in preparing and publishing his Hebrew Bible in two Vols. Folio; which came out in 1780. He had above 9000*l*\* subscribed, which he may be said to have expended on his work: a work greatly respected in Europe, and carried on not only in Europe but in Asia and Africa†; his Ten Annual Accounts of the progress of his work after it was publicly supported, make now an interesting little Volume.—As to the number of MSS and Editions compared, I think he says, in his Dissertation at the end of his Bible, that they amount “ad numerum ferè septingentesimum;”—in 1769 he had 265 collations to digest; which, if we reflect that the collations were made by comparing Letter with Letter, is prodigious!—some of the more distant foreign collations had not then arrived in England. 358 MSS had been used at the end of the Pentateuch: see the Bible Vol 1. end of Deut.

Of the number of variations in these 265 collations we may form some idea, if we observe, that there were 1200 in one single collation; in comparing two very accurate printed Editions; that of 1488 printed at Soncino (the first printed Edition, I think, of the whole Hebrew Bible) with Van Hooght's Amst. 1705.—

We have already said, that there were 600 various readings in collating 2 Sam. xxii. with the 18th Psalm.

I feel

\* See Ten Annual Accounts. p. 171. &c.

† One MS from a Jew in *America* is mentioned, Ann. Accts. p. 161.



I feel myself interested about the Pentateuch partly expected from *Naplofe* (*Sichem*, at the foot of Gerizim and Ebal)—and I feel a wish, that Dr. Kennicott had consulted his health more, though he had left part of his work to others.

3. The variations here spoken of are not such, as to affect our *faith or practice* in any thing material: they are mostly of a minute, sometimes of a trifling nature. — Dr. Powell says, \* “The worst manuscript extant would not pervert one article of our Faith, or destroy one moral precept.”—We may look at an instance or two of the most important sort.—That mentioned in Bp. Pearson on the Creed. p. 610. 1st edit.; p. 303. folio †.—And that considered by Lardner, in his *Credibility &c.*, Act. xv. 20, 29.—Even 1 John v. 7. is not the only text, nor perhaps one of the principal, on which our Faith in the Trinity is founded.

In the Old Testament is observed, that a great number of the variations are in Names and Numbers ‡.

4. Nevertheless, the variations which we find are not to be neglected as of no consequence: had we no instances to prove this, we could see, that it must be presumptuous and disrespectful to neglect bringing as near perfection as possible the sacred Oracles.

—Who

\* p. 65.

† 1 Cor. xv. 51.

Omnes dormiemus, non autem omnes immutabimur. (Alex.)  
Omnes resurgemus, non autem omnes immutabimur. (Vulgate.)  
Non omnes dormiemus, omnes autem immutabimur. (ours.)

Here is seemingly a great difference; but we all believe every one of these three affirmations.

We shall all die, one way or other, but not all in that way which is called *changing*.

There shall be a general Resurrection, but not a general *changing*.  
Not all men shall go to *Graves*, (some shall be taken up into the Air &c.); but we shall all have spiritual bodies.

‡ Kennicott's State, &c. Vol. 1. p. 11, 12.

—Who could have thought that so much would have been said, as has been by the *Socinians*, on the difference between  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\acute{o}\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ ? . . . Chrysostom's comparison of the Scripture to *Gold*, as to weighing every grain of it, is just and reasonable.

5. Our business then, and scholars and Christians, seems to require, that we should reflect a little on the *Causes* of those varieties, which have been described; it may be some satisfaction to see how they may be owing to *men*, and need not be charged upon Moses and the Prophets \*.—

Those, who write, may be either *disinterested* or *interested*; though disinterested, they will run into mistakes, without great and constant care; even supposing them to understand what they write; in that case, they will often affect great sagacity, and get wrong, through a desire of doing something uncommonly ingenious.—If they do not understand what they write, they are every moment in danger of error; particularly, when they copy *books*, (we may say from experience) of taking *marginal* notes into the text.

But some scribes have been *interested*, either as getting their livelihood by writing, or as wanting to have expressions favor some particular opinions;—in the first case, they would take a sentence by the lump, be unwilling to blot, and make themselves easy if what they wrote came much to the same, as what they ought to have written †.—In the latter case, if they wanted to favor certain opinions, they would be guilty of pious or malicious frauds.

So far we have supposed Scribes to write singly; but several might be obliged to copy from one original;

\* Kenn. State. Vol. 1. p. 271.

† Scribunt (Librarii) non quod inveniunt, sed quod intelligunt, et dum alienos errores emendare nituntur, ostendunt suos.



original; in that case, sometimes the eye, sometimes the ear (when one dictated to several,) would mislead them: and wrong words would often be substituted for right ones, when there was a likeness of shape, or a likeness of sound.

If we wish confirmation of this, we may read Lardner's Account of Origen.

Dr. Kennicott observes \*, that all variations must be made by *Omission, Addition, Transposition, or Change*.—And, in his directions † to Collators, he tells them to observe all differences of Words and Letters, of each MS from some printed copy, whether they be 1. Additions. 2. Omissions. 3. Transpositions. 4. Variations. 5. Corrections. 6. Rasures.—But these are rather modes of varying, than *causes*: they are sources of various readings.

6. It may be proper, after considering the causes of various readings, to take a specimen of the ways of reasoning in order to *ascertain the right reading*.

1. The earlier manuscript, *ceteris paribus*, is more likely to be right than the later, because every copying is liable to new errors.

2. The greater number of MSS confirm any reading, the more probable that reading is; care being taken, that any manuscript, with all that have been copied from it, shall be reckoned only as one.

3. If a reading seems likely to have been an error of a writer, it may be rejected; as when marks without meaning resemble others that have meaning; and these are only found in few MSS.

4. If a reading A may have arisen out of another reading B, but B cannot have arisen out of A, then is B the more probable reading. ‡

5. That

\* State, &c. Vol. 1. p. 272.

† Ten Annual Accounts, p. 36.

‡ I take the substance at least of these criteria to be in Michaelis's Introd. Lect. to Gr. Test. 4to.

5. That reading, which makes a passage more connected is preferable ; all due allowance being made for abruptness in the particular case. St. Paul is apt to digress abruptly.

6. Yet it is to be remembered, that an obscure reading is less likely to be a conjectural emendation than a perspicuous one.

7. Nay, some errors are recommendations ; because voluntary corruptions are more to be feared than involuntary ; and errors sometimes prove, that the transcribers do not intend to falsify.

8. Allied to this, is one of the most unexpected criteria : viz. that in a *quotation*, in two copies compared, if one is inaccurate, the inaccurate *quotation* is the the *right reading*, and therefore will recommend the Copy. If the writer of that which is accurate could consult the Book from which the Quotation is made, there is a suspicion, that he might correct by it, instead of transcribing faithfully ; in which Case, we should have a juster quotation but a false reading. Now what we want is the genuine reading. Supposing St. Mark quoted Isaiah inaccurately, or according to a Hebrew Copy different from the Copyist's ; the Copyist, instead of transcribing simply, might turn to Isaiah, and make St. Mark quote (as he thinks) accurately ; —whereas, no Scribe would ever be tempted to make St. Mark quote inaccurately ; therefore he, who gives the inaccurate quotation, is the more faithful Scribe, and his reading the *genuine* reading. —Such fidelity may be the means of making us correct our present copies.

9. I conclude these Criteria with observing, that perusing those Authors, who quote the Scriptures, may be a great help towards investigating the true text.—Many quotations of the Old Testament are



made in the Talmuds \*, and principal Jewish comments, composed five or six hundred years ago. —And many, from both old and new, occur in the Christian Fathers. Had not Origen's works been in part lost, it is thought we should have known how every † part of Scripture was read early in the third Century.

This last ‡ criterion is like that of *Versions*; which will occur in the next Chapter.

In short, avoiding various readings has been rather a matter of prejudice, religious apprehension, not distinguishing religious books from religion, than of Judgment; and I should think, the Integrity of the Hebrew Text will henceforth be very little more defended than that of the Greek. Though collecting variations in different Copies of Scripture does imply some imperfection, yet every rational collation will bring us nearer to the possession of the genuine word of God: Men dread entering upon painful, uncomfortable, disgraceful remedies, or series of expedients, however necessary for their health or fortune; but, after they are fairly entered, they feel themselves in the right way. I must confess, with regard to the imperfections and corruptions of the Text of Scripture, I have a satisfaction in feeling myself a *Man*; on the same footing in that, as in other important concerns. I feel, in being so situated, a security from Enthusiasm and Superstition; I feel a call to exert myself in recovering the purity of Revelation, on principles of reason and experience, by a method which must naturally

\* Kenn. Annual Accounts, p. 114.

† Lardner, Credib. in Origen. See also in Cyprian, and Pearson on the Creed, about 1 Cor. xv. 51.

‡ If any one wishes to carry this matter farther, he may have recourse to Wettstein's 34 Canons, and the confirmation of them: his Gr. Test. in 12mo. contains them.

naturally bring on an attention to the sacred writings. I feel a liberal freedom in being exempted from all inducements to use or adopt pious frauds; than which, especially in falsifying the word of God, nothing can be more abhorrent from Piety, nothing more presumptuous\*.—Nay more: though it is certainly a fault to alter the sacred writings, by design or negligence; and an evil to have them altered; yet the incidental good arising out of evil shews, in this case as in many others, the astonishing wisdom and goodness of the Divine Government: we are now precisely so situated, that our Faith and morals are not hurt by the variations of Copies of the Scripture, and yet so that we are forcibly impelled to examine them minutely; the result must be, that the faults of our predecessors can scarcely escape us, and that we shall make perpetual improvements.

\* It is to be feared, that some eminent men, who have a great part of their Lives employed fine talents in the service of Religion, have given into Deceits.—Even Bp. Walton is said to have been too peremptory in speaking from his own Knowledge about the Samaritan Version. (Kenn. State. 2. 31). And Mr. Travis gives a very indifferent account of Erasmus. Such men must have deceived themselves, by some prejudices, and, in some way, must have confounded Religion with some human means of promoting what they took for granted was the real Will of God.



## C H A P. IX.

## OF VERSIONS OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.

1. **I**F we look back to the time when the Pentateuch was first published, and view the state of the Israelites from that time to the separation of the twelve Tribes into *ten* and *two*; we have only the idea of one single community; and though from Dan to Beersheba might be a considerable distance, yet the people were so united, by the nature of their worship, that they would not want the Scriptures in more than one Language. Nor would any translations be required for foreigners, because they were Idolaters, and the religion of Israel was intended to separate its Professors from neighbouring nations.—And, when the twelve tribes became two separate communities, they continued in the same country, and though some provincial Dialects might gradually arise, yet the Scriptures in the original Language would continue intelligible, and capable of being read to the common people.—But when the main body of both communities were carried captive to Babylonia, a greater dispersion took place, a greater mixture with strangers, and of course a greater variety of Dialects; the Hebrew got mixed with the Chaldee at Babylon, and with the Syriac at Palestine; and therefore would become a kind of *Syro-Chaldaic* \* language, in whatever *character* it was written.

2. Hence

\* Kenn. Sate, 2, 316.

2. Hence it may not be difficult to conceive the nature and end of the *Samaritan Version*; it is supposed to have been made about the time \* of Ezra, a little above 400 years before Christ: at that time, there would be people in Samaria, who would want copies of the Pentateuch; and, in making them, it would be natural to *modernize* them so that they would be read with the greatest ease and readiness. If one looks at a *Samaritan Grammar*, which I take to be a set of Rules for reading this Samaritan Version, one may conceive, that the Samaritans, 400 years before Christ, might understand what we call the Samaritan Pentateuch, or Samaritan Text, full as well as common Englishmen could now read Wickliffe's English Bible; but they might want something nearer present Spelling and Phraseology, as much as we do †. Whether we should call Wickliffe's English Bible in modern letters, spelling and idioms, a *Version* of Wickliffe's Bible, is not material; we rather should *not*; and therefore I am inclined to say, there was no translation, strictly speaking, before that of the LXX.—As to the difference between the Samaritan *Text* ‡ and *Version*, it is very small; Kennicott says, that the Version in general “expresses exactly the || words of the Text;” I suppose, it differs no more than might very easily be accounted for by supposing it to have been taken from a copy a little different from that which we have; nay, the mere transcribing might perhaps account for such variations as are found. Walton has

\* Kennicott's State, Vol. 2. p. 30. 316. Walton's Prolegomena: but Walton speaks of more than one Version of the Samaritan Pentateuch; of one into Greek, another into Arabic.

† This idea is only my own imagination.

‡ Masclef, Pref. to Samaritan Grammar. “Pluribus in locis discrepare.”

|| State. 1. 430.



has noted them at the bottom of the column, that contains the Latin Translation of the Samaritan\* text.

When, through Alexander's conquests, and other causes, Greek became a general Language; and when, by Ptolemy's carrying the Jews into Ægypt, they became much dispersed; a Greek version was found needful. But of this we spoke particularly in the last Chapter†.

The Chaldee *Paraphrases* of ‡ *Onkelos* on the *Law*, and § *Jonathan* on the *Prophets*, are of great antiquity, and throw light upon the Sacred Text; but they cannot be called *Versions* ¶; and if they could, it is not easy to ascertain their age. I should think, the Jews made some sort of Chaldee *Paraphrases*, soon after the Babylonish Captivity, or during it; but we do not know of what sort they were; they might not be *written*. No one places *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* (I think) higher than our Saviour's time; and from their not being mentioned by the early Christian writers (as Origen, Jerom, Epiphanius, &c.) great doubts have arisen *when* they lived, or || who they were ¶¶.

4. *Christians* differed much from Jews, as to their motives for spreading Translations. The Jewish

\* See Masclef, Pref. to Samar. Grammar.

† "The Greek Version being confessedly most ancient," &c. see Kennicott's State, 2. 325.

‡ "R. Aquila, whom they call Onkelos." Brerewood, Chap. ix. p. 36. mentioned before, Chap. vi. Sect. 7.

§ Masclef, Vol. 2. beginning of Preface to Chaldee Grammar. Yet Walton calls them Versions.

|| Simon de Var. edit. bibl. Cap. 13.—quoted in Kennicott's State, &c. Vol. 2. p. 168.

¶¶ Something should be said of the *Jerusalem Targum*, and the *other Jonathan*, on the Law. Walton's Prolegomena.—Preface to the Chaldee, &c. Lexicon of Buxtorf, Jun.

It should also be remarked, that *Law*, *Prophets* and *Hagiographa*, comprehend the whole Bible; though this will occur Book 4. on Art. 6. sect. 9.

Jewish Religion was to constitute a separate people; the Christian was to be preached to "all nations." And the Christian Dispensation consists, in part, of the Old Testament.—The LXX incidentally published the Revelation of the Old Testament to the world, though they *aimed* only to accommodate Jews; Christians desired to propagate their sacred writings all over the world: it was a part of their Religion to do so.

5. Accordingly, amongst the more ancient Christians we find Versions, in all the known and civilized parts of the world;—in *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Africa*.—In *Europe*, the Latin;—in *Asia* (not to mention the Greek any more) the Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Persian;—in *Africa*, the Æthiopic and the Coptic.—This is only an enumeration; but we may observe, that what is now called *Abyssinia* was the \* Christian Æthiopia, and Ægypt *αἰα Κοπτη*, so that the *Coptic* means the Ægyptian. They speak Arabic in Ægypt now, but the vulgar tongue of the ancient Ægyptians, before the incursions of Saracens, was called Coptic; and the Christians in Ægypt are still called *Kophts*†, *Copti*; and are able to keep a settlement at or near Coptus, or Coptos, in Ægypt.

6. Amongst the more *modern* Christians also, there have been many versions of the Scriptures. Russian, French, German, Dutch, Slavonian (a general language) &c. which we may see mentioned in Calmet's Dictionary under *Version*—but,  
of

\* See Cellarius, *Æthiopia*: did Candace forward Christianity in Æthiopia? or her Minister?

† Pococke's Travels, Vol. I. Contents. The Gospel was preached early in Ægypt: tradition says, by St. Mark; and the Patriarch of Alexandria is held successor to St. Mark there, as the Pope is to St. Peter at Rome.—The Christian Liturgy is in Coptic now, but the Priests understand little of it; get prayers by Heart, and pray without understanding.



of all modern versions, we are most concerned with *our own*.—The first *English* version was Wickliffe's, published (in manuscript) in 1383, scarcely legible now.—There is also the English Bible of *Coverdale*, printed in 1535\*.—There was one in Queen *Elizabeth's* time; (London 1597) and, not to be too particular, that English Version, which we now use, was made in the time of K. James I. by Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, and 46 others, each of whom † undertook his share, and laboured with great assiduity and attention.

7. The *utility* of some antient versions has been already hinted at: Ancient versions are instead of Originals;—when original MSS are lost, Versions enable us to know what they contained. Kennicott says, Ancient Versions “afford much more plentiful § assistance” than MSS:—I suppose, because they are more ancient than any MSS we possess; and they help us, both as to the meaning of very old lost MSS, and as to expressions:—in his researches and collations, the worth of Versions increased upon him greatly. “In those MSS,” says he, “which I at first discovered, I soon met with several readings, entirely different from the printed Hebrew copies; and exactly agreeing with the Greek, Syriac, and other ancient versions.” Instances are to be found by his Indexes, in his State of the Hebrew Text, of readings confirmed by ancient Versions.

As

\* Kenn. State 1. 39.

† There is a list of *English* Editions of the Bible in Le Long's *Bibliotheca*, 8vo. Vol. 2. p. 584. And I think in Calmet under *Bible*—Moreover, *Johnson's* Historical Account of Engl. Translations, Ainsworth's *Peutateuch*, &c. the Geneva Bible, and Rhemish Testament, seem worth mentioning.

‡ Neal's History of the Puritans, Index, Bible.

§ State, 1. 271.

As to \* *particular Versions*, there is difficulty, and there may be dispute.—The *Syriac* has been of great use, and every one wishes to have it on his side; yet it has its imperfections. The Eastern Christians value it highly†, and say, it was made in the first century; its advocates, however, distinguish between a very old literal *Syriac* version, and one done more lately‡ in the sixth Century, not yet printed; they also, in commending the old one, except some parts done later than the rest, and done by some inferior linguist; but Archdeacon Travis, in his 5th Letter to Mr. Gibbon, mentions some material omissions in the whole taken together, and refers to Beza for more.

The *Æthiopic*, *Coptic*, *Armenian*, require too much oriental learning, and indeed are too little understood, for us to consider them at present. Of the Arabic version we may say, that, as Arabic is the language which is generally used in the Dominions of the Grand Signor, and which has superseded the Coptic, it is useful to his Christian subjects, but it should be conceived as additional, and as made since the time § of Mahomet: it is used *with* other Eastern Versions.—Whoever wishes, at any time, to enter farther into this part of Literature, may consult *Simon's* History of the Versions, which is far from being written in a dull manner; and he will find Bengelius solid, clear, and intelligent.

8. The *Latin* Versions have been most used in Europe, and have been called authentic by the Church || of Rome; they are in some sense set  
above

\* Versions may shew what Books were anciently thought *Canonical*; Jer. Jones uses this argument.

† Wotton's *Misna*, Pref. p. xix. See Jeremiah Jones. Richardson's *Canon*.

‡ J. D. Michaelis, 4to. sect. 52.

§ J. D. Michaelis, sect. 54. 4to.

|| See Council of Trent. Session 4. *Decretum de Editione et usu Sacrorum Librorum*.



above the Greek by \**Hardouin*, and have had many copies, in other languages, corrected in order to suit them.—But a distinction should be made, we are told, between the *Old Latin*, before Jerom, and that made by him†.

About the time of Christ, the Latin language was supplanting the Greek as a *general language*, and it soon might be called the general Language of the *Western Church*. Indeed it was natural, that the knowledge of the Roman Language should spread in the Roman Provinces, especially as law-processes were carried on in Latin. But independently of this, Latin Scriptures must have been wanted; certainly, as was before observed, Hellenistic Greek was understood by most *Jews*, and we know the more polite Romans studied pure Greek; but yet many Christian converts must want Latin Scriptures, and those chiefly, who knew Latin not as a learned, but as a *vernacular* language; that is, who had learnt it not by writing, but speaking; not by rules of Grammar, but by the *ear*. Now conceive a Latin version to be made for such persons, and perhaps by such, and those Jews,—with great care, nicety, and judgment, and you will have probably a tolerably just idea of the *Original Vulgate* or *Old Italic Version*.—It *might* be the produce of the first Century.—It would, of course, contain expressions lower and more familiar, than were to be found in classic authors, but such as were used in conversation, at least of the ordinary people, Syriacisms; and would not always be strict in point of

\* J. D. Michaelis sect. 64. Quarto.

† “The common opinion is, that there were several Latin versions before Jerom, but one more eminent than the rest, “called *Italic*.”—Waterland on the Athan. Creed, p. 113, 2d Edit.—where, or p. 112, four sorts of *Latin* Psalters are mentioned, *Italic*, Roman, Gallican, and Hebraick.

of \* Grammar.—It would, moreover, be very literal. —We are told, that there is no MS of the old Italic extant; that some parts of this version are printed by Martianay; (St. Matthew and St. James); and that Nobilius has collected some parts of it out of the ancient Fathers; (Chambers—*Bible*, or *Vulgate*); and that some of the Old Roman Liturgies contain expressions from it, (Chambers);—also that some Greek MSS have this version annexed; the Cambridge for one, but yet I do not expect to see it exactly answer the above description, in all particulars: like the antiquarian's shield, I fear we shall find it scoured, till the principal good of it, as a piece of Antiquity, is lost; till it is incapable of confirming or disproving any readings of the MSS we now wish to study. We know of no version, which has been so often altered, reformed, corrupted, (what you please) as the Latin: but, if we get an *idea* of *two sorts*, we can speak and read of the mixtures of them, tolerably.

I take the difference between the old Italic and *Jerom's* Latin Version, to resemble the difference between vulgar tongue, spoken, and general classical language, written:—however, Jerom's main design, as he tells us in his works, was to correct the version of the LXX, and reduce the Latin of the New Testament to the standard of the original *Greek*.—This being the case, *Jerom's* Latin Version shews us what were (in his judgment) the best readings in his time. *Dr. Bentley* did not think our present Greek Testament so pure as it might be made, by the help of MSS and Jerom's Version: and he published proposals for a new Edition; but he was opposed, particularly by Dr. Middleton, and never executed his design: the proposals are in  
the

† For Instances, see Michaelis. Quarto, sect. 61, 62, from Martianay.



the *Biographia Britannica*—under *Bentley*: and may hereafter be useful.

9. Versions are very commonly made from *other Versions*; and sometimes it may be doubtful from what a version is made. Versions have been made from the LXX\*, the Syriac†, and the Latin‡.—Sometimes, a version seems odd in some places, when the strangeness will go off by comparing it with *both* Greek and Latin§.—A second version may prove the right reading of a passage in the first, in the same way as the first proves with regard to the Original.—In reckoning the authorities, which favour a reading in the Original, a version and all versions taken from it, must reckon but as *one*.

10. A *Polyglott* gives us the principal Versions at one view, in the different columns of one page. Polyglotts are magnificent works. I shall only mention two: that finished at *Complutum* (Alcala) in Spain in 1514, which is said to have cost that great Statesman, Cardinal Ximenes||, 50,000 Ducats;—and that made by Brian *Walton*, Bishop of Chester, who died in 1661, sometimes called the *London Polyglott*, or the *English*, in contradistinction to the *Paris Polyglott*¶.

The *Complutensian Polyglott* is sometimes called the *Complutensian Edition*, or the Edition of *Alcala*; it is in six Volumes Folio: it contains the Old Testament in Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek and Latin: The New, in Greek and Latin; the Greek Type was made on purpose: the book is printed from the best MSS, which the vast influence of Ximenes could

\* Pearson's Pref. to LXX. p. 6.

† Travis's Letters, 4to. p. 89.

‡ Michaelis. § Michaelis.

|| Gibbon's History, Vol. 3. p. 545.

¶ Le Long gives an account of these; and Calmet at the end of his Dictionary.

could procure; the chief of them were sent from the Vatican. Forty-two men were employed fifteen years in completing it; and, though he was a General, as well as Statesman, and Cardinal, he did a great deal himself.

*Walton's Polyglott* is also in six volumes Folio: containing the Old Testament in Hebrew, Samaritan (as far as it goes), Syriac, Chaldee, in the Greek of the LXX, in the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic; with Latin Translations, I think, to all except the Vulgate; the Latin of the Hebrew is put over it, word over word;—The New Testament is in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Æthiopic, Arabic, and Persic.—The French reckon Walton's only an improvement, or good Edition, of *Le Jay's*.—The *Prolegomena* to Walton's make a good small volume of themselves; I wish they were published in 8vo in England, as they have been abroad\*.

What has been said will be sufficient to shew the manner, in which versions are made evidence for determining the *genuineness* of any part of the sacred text.

11. It has now been asked, for some time, whether we ought not to have a *new Version* of the Scriptures into our own Language. Dr. Kennicott thinks† the proper time not far off, and, as I remember, Dr. Rutherford, who opposed him in some things, agreed with him in this; and gave this University his concurring opinion, in his Latin Sermons: but we seem to me scarce to be sufficiently prepared for such a work at present: Dr. Kennicott grounds

\* I have a small volume 12mo. printed in London 1655—(2d Edit) called an Introduction to the Oriental languages, nine in number, with a Preface by Walton, filling half the Volume. This Preface is dated London, Oct. 1, 1654; it seems to have been preparatory to the publication of his Polyglott.

† State 1. p. 565. and conclusion of his Annual Accounts.



grounds his opinion on the *Collations* published by him; but, I should think, no one man can collate with sufficient exactness to be depended upon; besides that, he did not make nearly all the collations himself, which he published: the same work should be gone through again: with Dr. Kennicott's collations;—whoever went through it would make many new remarks; and, where they only confirmed what he had done, they would be of great use. Who durst adopt implicitly all the remarks he makes? even though no particular objection appeared? If persons of Learning were appointed to take each a small part of the Scriptures, to examine all the readings, propose new senses for the world to judge of, a new Translation might go on gradually and safely; the Legislature might employ proper persons; and at last collect the parts, and set the seal of public Authority.

I fear also, there is scarce a sufficient fund of sacred *Literature* amongst us, just at present; we are apt to view things superficially;—nor perhaps is there a zeal for Religion sufficiently strong and steady. The 17th Century was more *learned* than the present.

It is not enough, that new Translators are likely to render some parts better than they were before; the question is, whether upon the whole they are like to produce a better Translation.—Yet all parts must be submitted to their discretion. From the attempts, which I have \* seen, at new English Translations, though perhaps each may hit off some improvements; I profess myself desirous at present to continue the use of our present Bibles; especially as they are the established language of Christian piety; and associated with religious Sentiments. How many people have *Psalms* and Chapters by heart!

\* Dr. Campbell's, Mr. Wakefield's, &c.

heart! the periods are become *congenial* to them ;—  
the sound of them is the sound of Religion itself.

1796. If any one thinks, that the Academical scholar would have born more learning, relative to the *language* of Scripture, than is given him in the five preceding Chapters, such an one should observe, in the Advertisement prefixed to the Heads of Lectures, how much of Bp. *Pearson's* work on the Creed was read in every Course ; and then it would occur, that many discussions on languages, &c. must be wanted in order to make the Notes intelligible, and to give them their due weight.—Any Student may *now* gain better instruction, than I could have given him, from Mr. Marsh's translation of the 4th Edition of Michaelis's Lectures, with learned Notes.





## C H A P. X.

OF INTERPRETING EXPRESSIONS OF SCRIPTURE  
BY ENTERING INTO THE *CIRCUMSTANCES* OF  
THOSE, TO WHOM THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY  
ADDRESSED.

1. **L**ET us now suppose all the words of Scripture fixed and agreed upon : still, something more than Lexicons and Grammars is necessary to our attaining the true and full sense of them. And that is, *putting ourselves in the place* of those who spoke, or heard; or, what amounts to the same, interpreting words of Scripture as we should *like words in common life*. Some parts of Scripture are indeed lofty and sublime, and remote from common life; but I do not imagine, that these have occasioned either so much controversy, or so much anxiety of mind, as the more familiar parts; plain narrations, dialogues, letters;—all expressions, in which we must endeavour to understand, as we should understand similar expressions in similar compositions.—I doubt not but this may seem an easy matter to some, on the first mention; but it is attended with considerable difficulties: at this day, it requires great knowledge, and great steadiness of attention.—Some persons would be apt to say, ‘if I may but interpret Scripture as I do ordinary expressions, that is all I wish for; it is no pain or trouble to me to understand what common people say to me; I do it *without trying* to do it:’ This is true; popular language seems to express what it means, to those who are rightly circumstanced: but

but why does this happen? because each man in such case knows familiarly and *habitually*, not only what the words express, but what they *imply*: for, sometimes, they imply more than they express; sometimes, express more than they imply; but habit makes all this easy to those, who are exactly *in the right circumstances*. Take a man, who is ever so little out of the right circumstances, let him come from a different *county*, let him be of a different *occupation*, and he immediately wants some explanatory information; sometimes, he will see too little in the words used to him; and, sometimes, too much. Not that he, who is in the right circumstances, understands rightly, without numberless *acts of the mind*; only he is *not conscious* of them; any more than he is of the actions of the muscles of his eyes, when he looks at objects at different distances.—Hence, if one *far removed* from the right circumstances, wants to form a judgement how he should understand expressions, if he could put himself in those right circumstances, he must have to estimate, First, what knowledge the person rightly situated has, which he has not;—Secondly, what are those acts of the mind, which such person performs habitually, when he takes the words he hears rightly; so that they really are intended to imply neither *more nor less* than he conceives them to imply.—This is what we should do, if possible, with the words of *Scripture*; as we are *far removed* from the circumstances of those, for whom they were calculated, we should see what knowledge the persons, rightly circumstanced for understanding them, had, which we have not; and we should analyze those acts of the mind, by which they were able, habitually, without being conscious of it, to give them precisely that degree of meaning, which they were intended to convey. I do not conceive, that



we can do this perfectly, but we may approach towards it; it is the end, at which we ought to aim.

The way to approach as near as possible seems to be this; to observe first how, in our own common life, words imply more or less than they express; and then apply our observations to Scripture;—using them first to illustrate some plainer cases, in order to get them, at length, applied to all cases whatever.—This is a general view of the subject before us.—

2. If we attend to the force of expressions used in common life, we see that expressions imply *customs*; and that common popular language *alludes* to these customs perpetually: under customs may be included customary *notions*: here words mean *more* than they express.

3. Any one, who was not convinced of this, might try to explain a familiar Letter or conversation in his own language, to a *foreigner*. He would find, that he had many long and difficult explanations to make; and, when they were made, the foreigner would not still be exactly in the place of a native, in understanding the Letter or conversation.—Every one may conceive this in some degree; perhaps no one perfectly, who has not tried the experiment: perhaps no one who *has*.

4. Many of us may have tried to read of the things of common life in *dead Languages*; and, when we have attempted to put ourselves in the place of those, for whom they were immediately intended, in what researches have we been engaged! Grævius in twelve folio Volumes, and Gronovius in thirteen, have told us many things Roman and Grecian; and given us many descriptions, and many opinions on this side and that; but still we  
fall

fall far short of the knowledge which a plain citizen \* of Rome or Athens would have, without ever suspecting that he had any knowledge at all: we fall far short of understanding those allusions, which such an one would make in every thing he said; without any consciousness that he was alluding to any thing; and would understand, without being aware, that the words meant more than they expressed.

5. In such expressions as have been hitherto considered, words imply *more* than they express; but some words imply *less*:—as is the case when we make

\* Suppose the following familiar Letter to be explained to a *Chinese*; or to any people 1800 years hence, our Language being supposed to be then a *dead* Language.—

Sir,

Cambridge, April 5, 1780.

On *Thursday*, I was at the *Affizes* for this *County*; as only one *felon* was to be tried, and he likely to be only *transported*, I sat in the *Nisi prius* end of the *Shire Hall*. The *Jury* were ignorant, but followed the direction of the *Chief Baron*, who sat as *Judge*; I dined at *two o'Clock* with the *Sheriff*, as his *Chaplain*, at *Trinity Lodge*; the *Judge* dined in his *coat* and *waistcoat*, without his *gown*, or full-bottom'd *wig*. A small party adjourned to the *Rose*; we had a round of *toasts*, and drank all the leading members of both *Houses*; *Whigs* and *Tories*. The *Punch* and *Tobacco* being too much for me, I went into the *Bar*, but some people being there engaged with *Whist* and *Backgammon*, I went into the *Balcony*, and got a little *Porter*: and below in the *Market-place* I saw a *Mob*, in which a *Brazier's Apprentice* got so hurt, that some *shillings* were gathered for him, and he was sent to the *Hospital*; what enraged them was, fancying they had found part of a *Press-gang*; so they pulled off their hats, *huzzad*, and cried out "*Wilkes and Liberty!*" a *Quaker* passed by, but he would as soon have put on a *Sword*, as have taken off his *Hat*; tho' he was offered plenty of *Roast Beef* and *Plumb-Pudding*.—But the *Post* is just going out, so I must, in haste,

subscribe myself your

obedient *Servant*

J. H.

Fifty-four Dissertations might be made on this Letter;—such as those of *Grævius* or *Gronovius*.



make *Declarations*, (including agreements, promises, threats, and narrations); or give *directions* to those, who are to act in our stead. We say, “I will *undoubtedly* be with you at the time appointed;”—yet no one understands that to mean, I will be with you, though I break a limb, though my nearest relation dies, in the mean time: no; any thing is allowed as an excuse, which we should have specified, had it occurred to us as likely to happen.

6. Words also imply *less* than they express, when we give *directions* to others. Any one, who reflects, will perceive how difficult it is to give directions to Servants, which shall be in all cases executed literally. A servant sees this, and ventures to depart from the literal sense of his Master's commands; he is seldom commended if he does right; ‘how could you have done otherwise?’ is his only compliment; and he is unreasonably blamed, if he happened to judge wrong: ‘what business had you to *think*?’ it is said;—whereas it ought to be said, in such case, ‘why did you not think *more*? you would then have seen, that I could not intend, by what I said, to give you such an advantage; or, I could not mean to throw upon you such a piece of Drudgery.’—

7. By pursuing this train, and keeping the subject in our thoughts amidst the common occurrences of life, we may come to attain a pretty good idea, how, in our own common discourse, words sometimes imply more than they express, and sometimes less: let us now apply our observations to some plainer cases in *Scripture*.

8. First, as to the *Allusions* contained in scriptural language:—every allusion is a taking for granted, that the reader, or person addressed, knows something so well that it need not be specified; now it is impossible we should understand what any one  
says

says or writes, unless we know those things, which he takes it for granted we know. Hence, to understand the language of Scripture, as far as concerns the Allusions it contains, is to understand whatever was familiar to those, to whom the several parts of Scripture were originally addressed:—now this, after such an interval, is to understand *antiquities*: which word may, in a large sense, include *History*, and its common appendages.

*Antiquities* are either *natural* or *artificial*; which latter may be *public* or *private*:—As to *natural* antiquities, we ought to have some knowledge of the *animals* mentioned in Scripture, and of the *vegetables*; our Saviour alludes to the *lilies*, and to *vineyards*; and makes use of the things commonly known with regard to *figs*.—He also alludes to local rules about the *weather*.

*Artificial* antiquities of a *public* nature, which may be wanted, are those concerning the Divisions of *time*, for understanding the Passovers, and the Hours of the day. Those concerning Coins, Laws, Tribunals \*, Punishments; rules of adoption and redemption.—And we might mention, with propriety, the religious ceremonies of the *Jews*, as far as they are not found in Scripture; as well as the Pagan and Samaritan rites.

Antiquities of a *private* nature may relate to the forms of buildings, to apparel †, to funerals, modes of travelling, &c.; the allusions made by St. Paul in particular, are well described by Dr. Powell, in his 15th Discourse.—

The manner of acquiring such knowledge of antiquities may be, by reading Travels, in which there is this advantage, that, in the East, there is less difference between ancient and modern customs, than in the West.—Views of Ruins, such as those  
of

\* See Taylor on the Romans; Key, Art. 320.

† Wedding Garment.



of Palmyra, may afford help. The antiquities published at *Venice* in \* this century under *Ugolino* are so voluminous, that one would be unwilling to mention them, were it not that any parts of the work may be perused independently of the rest.—*Bochart* should be consulted. *Macknight's* preliminary Observations are easily † read.

Some knowledge of *History* is necessary for us, in order to have the right ideas about the Herods, the Authority of Pilate, and the Rulers mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles ; and the paying of Tribute.—The use of Prophecies is not to be understood, except we can compare a prediction with the events which fulfil it.—We should be able to compare sacred History with profane ; and trace out the History between the latest events of the Old Testament, and the earliest of the New. . Many Books may be consulted on this matter : Dean *Prideaux* is famous for connecting the Histories of the Old and New Testaments :—perhaps no one Book is preferable to *Collyer's* Sacred Interpreter : he refers to others ‡. .

History cannot be studied, without *Geography* and *Chronology* ; but moreover, Geography is wanted for descriptions of Travels and Voyages, things relating to the Lakes and Rivers, peculiarities of Climate ; and it may be studied in *Bochart*, *Sanfon*, *Cellarius*, *Wells*, &c.—Chronology teaches us the order of events in one place, and their coincidence in different places : we want it, to shew us the state of the world at the *coming* of Christ ; to shew the fulness of time ; and to connect the Dispensations of Grace, with the government of the World.

\* 34 Vols.—the first published in 1744 : the last in 1769.

† Calmet, at the end of his Dictionary, has a *Bibliotheca* ; in which he gives an account of all sorts of Books which tend to illustrate the Scriptures. Le Long does the same in his *Bibliotheca*.

‡ The first part of Lardner's *Credibility* should by all means be mentioned.

World. *Blair's* Tables are useful, and *Du Fresnoy*: *Macknight's* Chronological Dissertations, prefixed to his *Harmony*, may inform us in some points; and our veneration for *Sir Isaac Newton* may induce us to see how he applies his wonderful abilities to this part of Science.

A very great number of allusions are made in the sacred writings to *controverted Opinions*; Pagan, Jewish, and Christian; to Rabbinical Traditions, Jewish Sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes:—to the high Jewish notions of Election; to Heathen Sects of Philosophers, Stoics, Epicureans; to oriental Philosophy; to mixture of Jewish and Heathen notions held by the Samaritans; to the earliest Christian Heresies\*.

Such are the *allusions* of Scripture, and such is the knowledge required to understand and taste the writings, which contain them:—so far the words of Scripture imply *more* than they express†.

9. In the *Declarations* of Scripture, the words *imply less* than they express: they are to be limited and restrained. Declarations include agreements, promises, threats, narrations, accounting for events, —&c. — Things are said to be *impossible*, which are only so improbable, that the mind feels no expectation of their happening: In common life, we speak from our *feelings*: “it must needs be,” means, that the mind, estimating probabilities, feels no doubt of such an event: “God is no respecter of persons,” &c. Acts x. 32. has been generally thought an universal proposition; but  
Bp.

\* *Lightfoot's* *Horæ*, &c. were mentioned before.

† It is not to be conceived, that any thing like a *complete* account should be here attempted of Sacred Antiquities, Geography, &c. however useful;—they make a *separate* study; we would not here produce the Rules of Hebrew or Greek Grammar, though wanted for understanding Scripture.



Bp. Sherlock shews that it is not, in his 10th Discourse of Vol. 1st.—Indeed St. Paul mentions principles, on which we may build our limitations; “I speak after the manner of men,” (Rom. vi. 19). —“It is manifest that he is excepted” (1 Cor. xv. 27) —Dr. *Powell* \* closes his 7th discourse with a good sentence to our purpose; and I am inclined to add, that the difficulty of the texts, about God’s *hardening* the Heart of *Pharaoh*, arises from their not being sufficiently and naturally *limited*: God is to be praised for all *good*, even for that, which arises out of evil; and all such good, as well as the evil, is to be, in some indistinct way, considered as under his Government:—now the Jews received good from *Pharaoh*’s evil conduct; they must thank God for that good; they must declare him to be the cause of it, in some way unknown to them: *limit* the sayings to their partial views, to that *good*, which occasioned the sayings; and their difficulty will not be great; especially if we acquaint ourselves with the *habit*, which the Jews naturally had, under a Theocracy, of referring *every thing* to God, without exception,

10. Lastly, we are to apply what has been said about limitations of *directions* given for the conduct of others, to some of the plainer cases of scriptural *precepts*. We are directed 1 Pet. iv. 9. to use *hospitality*; but, can we suppose, that we are not to shut our doors against a notorious robber?—we are directed Rom. xii. 15. to “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep;”—but, are we to rejoice, when fraud triumphs over virtuous simplicity? Alexander wept, because he had no more worlds to conquer; are we to shed sympathetic tears on such an occasion?—Except we “become as *little children*” we “shall not enter into the kingdom

\* Dr. *Powell*, p. 117.

kingdom of Heaven," Matt. xviii. 3; may we not then be permitted to speak distinctly, to walk steadily? \* may we not read, write, think? (compare 1 Cor. xiii. 11.) "Look not thou upon the wine, when it is red," says Solomon; (Prov. xxiii. 31.). "Howl all ye drinkers of wine," says the prophet Joel; (i. 5).—it is not clear, that these sayings might not have made a set of Christian Rechabites, had not St. Paul advised † Timothy to drink no longer water, but a little wine for his bodily infirmities; yet the same limitation of drinking moderately, and with a view to health, might have been implied, if it had not been expressed ‡.

Precepts may be given by means of *praise or blame*: but here we must *limit* the praise and blame by the occasion, and scope of the passage. Our Saviour commended the *unjust Steward*, did he thereby favor injustice? God forbid! he favored *prudence*, and uniformity of conduct: the commendation was bestowed on the Steward, because he had done *wisely*; and spiritual prudence ought to keep pace with temporal. *David* was called the Man after God's own Heart; does scripture authorize Adultery and Murder? by no means:—for those crimes David was punished; he was dear to Jehovah, because he forwarded the interests of the *pure religion*, in spite of all temptations to Idolatry and Superstition; this was what God had chiefly at heart, for the principle

\* Pour être semblables a des enfans, on les voyoit s'abaisser a des petits jeux et affecter une simplicité peurile.—Hist. des Anabap. p. 257. This is quoted in "The principles and practices of Methodists farther considered" Cambr. 1761, p. 69. where are several other instances from the same History, much to the present purpose.—

† 1 Tim. v. 23.

‡ Joel i. 5. and 1 Tim. v. 23. form a *Contradiction*: there are many such in Scripture; all arising from the same cause, taking the *Letter*, without such limitations as are implied.



principle of conduct, in the Governors of his chosen People \*.—

11. Perhaps some of the *instances* here mentioned may be thought *needless*, because no one is likely to be misled in such cases;—it is true, that there is the most danger of error, where what is implied is the least evident: but these instances seem more likely, than any abstract reasoning, to lead us to a custom of interpreting all sayings of Scripture, by the circumstances in which they are used.—I am much mistaken, if such a custom would not be the means of removing, (not all difficulties, but) all disputes and dissensions about some of those doctrines, which are reckoned the most abstruse and intricate.—

• See Bishop Porteus's Sermon on this Subject:



## C H A P. XI.

OF APPLYING SAYINGS AND ACTIONS RECORDED  
IN THE SCRIPTURES, TO OURSELVES.

1. **T**HIS chapter is allied to the preceding, inasmuch as they both turn upon estimating Circumstances and Situations, taking the accuracy of expressions for granted: we interpret, by considering the circumstances of others; we apply, by considering our own: or, more strictly speaking, by making a comparison between the circumstances of those, to whom Scripture was immediately addressed, and our own.—If we neglect their circumstances, we shall do things enjoined only by the Letter of Scripture; if we neglect our own, we shall do things which are not enjoined at all, but barely mentioned.

2. But, though there is a connexion between the subjects of this Chapter and the preceding, they are quite distinct.

This chapter should go upon the supposition, that the end of the former is accomplished; the several expressions of Scripture should be now supposed to be rightly understood; but what is rightly *understood* may not be rightly *applied*. Though we do not mistake the sacred writers, we may mistake ourselves, and our own real situations. Or we may, by association of ideas, or prejudice, venerate things mentioned in Scripture, as if they were essential parts of Religion, though they are wholly insignificant



insignificant in themselves, and are not intended to be accounted otherwise. A child, brought up to venerate the Church, may venerate the joint-stool, that he has always seen there, though in reality it makes no part of the sacred building.

In some instances, the application of Scripture to ourselves may be so evident as, at this time, to require no caution or advice ; or it may be evident, that some parts of Scripture are now *inapplicable* : — as in those cases where all males are ordered to worship at Jerusalem three times a year \*; and the people of God are commanded to exterminate some societies of men, or put to death a large number of those, who ministered in a false Religion. And yet the times are not long past, in which things have been done on the same principles with these. King † Charles I. was justified by his Divines, by precedents borrowed from the Kings of Israel ; — “ The Mosaical Law was intended to be established, as the sole system of English Jurisprudence” ‡. — The Enthusiasts called *Millenarians*, or *Fifth-monarchy-men*, claimed to be the *Saints* of God, and to have the Dominion || of Saints. Nay, they went so far as to give up their own Christian names, and assume others from Scripture § ; like the Manicheans † of old. — And both parties, in the times we speak of, seem to have claimed a right of applying, in some degree, the injunctions given in barbarous times, against the worshippers of Baal,

to

\* Deut. xvi. 16. Deut. xx. 16, 17. 1 Kings xviii. 40.  
2 Kings x. 25.

† Dr. Powell, Disc. 3. p. 54.

‡ Hume's Engl. Hist. A.D. 1653.

|| Dan. vii. 27.

§ See the *Sussex Jury*, in Hume's Hist. A.D. 1653.

† Lardner, Works, Vol. 3. p. 407.

to those who differed from them in modes of Christian worship.—\*

Men, less heated by Enthusiasm and party-spirit than these, seem, at different times, to have erred in applying Scripture to their own cases:—but, before we mention their notions, let us see *in general* what we aim to establish.

3. Instead of adopting the sayings and actions recorded in Scripture, implicitly and absolutely, we ought to reason in some such manner as this: . . . If such a person, so situated, best answered the ends of such an Institution, by acting in such a manner; How shall we, in our situation, best answer the ends of the same?—Sometimes, merely proposing this form of inquiry will carry us right:—but, in more difficult cases, we shall have the general principles, the Nature and End of the Duty in question, to investigate, and from these to determine the particular cases; that is, how, in such cases, the ends of the Duty can be best attained.—However, in most questions, a good Heart will be more requisite than a good Head.

It may be thought, that investigating the Theory of any Duty, is superseding Scripture; but it seems to be the only method of preventing misapplication of Scripture: it seems to be what Scripture takes for granted we shall do to the utmost of our power.† —In the first age of Christianity ‡, *Wisdom and Knowledge*

\* How misapplying Scripture brought on the miseries of our Civil wars, is well explained by Dr. Powell, Disc. 3.—But he joins (of course) *misinterpretations* and *misapplications* together. See afterwards about *Heresy* being punished with death in England; seemingly from adopting Jewish ideas of punishing *blasphemy*, &c. B. 3. Chap. 14. Sect. 15.

† Before, 1. 4. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 8, 28. See Dr. Horsley's Ordination-Sermon, on 1 Cor. ii. 2. p. 10. Also see Warburton on the Spirit, p. 24, &c.—Mr. Locke on 1 Cor. ii. 2. sets out with rather a different idea; but concludes with diffidence; and in a manner reconcileable to Bp. Warburton.



*Knowledge* (human wisdom and knowledge) were given *supernaturally*, to *Apostles* and *Prophets*; in later ages, they are to be acquired naturally, by study and observation. Wisdom, as mentioned by St. Paul, is understood to be the kind of thing, which we are now recommending: if we endeavour to attain it, we must study all the phænomena natural and moral, which fall within our reach; and gather from them whatever Reason and Experience can teach, with regard to the greatest happiness of mankind: if we aim at *knowledge*, we must study whatever *Revelation* teaches concerning the Dispensations of God. Both are wanting in the subject before us.

4. Having thus proposed the general form of our inquiry, we may mention a particular instance, in which Scripture seems sometimes to have been misapplied.—Several things are said in Scripture about *Ministers of the Church*, which must, of course, point out some form of Church-Government. Now, supposing all men agreed in understanding the terms made use of in the scriptural distribution of Ecclesiastical authority; would it follow, that exactly the same kind of Church-ministers should be appointed in all religious communities? some have wished to make this their standard; But I should rather say, the right method was, to study, in human nature with *Wisdom*, and in Scripture with *Knowledge*, the Theory of Religious Society; its nature and ends, with the best methods of attaining those ends; under different climates, under different habitual notions, and different arbitrary customs: then, to consider the case of the earliest Christian Churches in these respects; then, our own case; and, on the comparison, apply the general form of reasoning; being cautious, neither lightly to adopt, nor needlessly to set aside the precedents

cedents of the Apostolic Ages : if Churches so situated, were so governed, in what manner were it best, that ours should be governed?— — The determination of this Question is not our \* present business : only the *manner*, in which it should be considered.— We hope, however, that our Church has determined in a manner, which these principles would justify.

5. Under the old Law, every *seventh day* of the week is appointed to be a day of rest, or *Sabbath* ; and, under the new Law, there is no direct command to change that day of rest from the seventh day of the week to the first. And some Christians have thought the Jewish Sabbath ought to be observed perpetually ; nay, some used to keep both Sabbaths. Yet the earliest Christians seem to have observed the first day, instead of the last ; and so do most later Christians.— There has been also a difference in the *degree* of rest, under the two different dispensations, and amongst different parties under each dispensation. How are we to settle our duty in this matter?—the method seems to be the same as before ; to endeavour to learn the true nature and end of a Sabbath, from the Nature of Man, to think how far his Body requires repose, and his mind to be turned from lower pursuits to moral and religious ones : how far outward decency and cleanliness promote inward purity, and humanity. (“ The Sabbath was made for *Man*, not Man for the Sabbath”). Next, to collect all the texts of Scripture enjoining it ; to learn the circumstances of those, who observed it first under the Mosaic, then under the Christian Dispensation ; afterwards, to compare our own circumstances with theirs ; and, finally, to say, if persons so circum-

stanced.

\* The subject belongs to Art. 36 of the Church of England.



stanced \* rested from their labours, on such a day of the week, and in such a manner; how could we, in our circumstances, best promote the ends of such an observance as a Sabbath?

6. Our Lord *washed the feet* of his Disciples; some have thought, that we ought literally "to wash one another's † feet:" (John xiii. 14.)—whether we ought or not, will depend upon reasoning of the same kind: we must consider the nature of man, the rectitude of acts of condescension ‡; how far they should be external and visible; how far this was a necessary office, and a customary servile one, according to the Eastern mode of travelling.—We should also observe, how actions were used in the East, instead of words; and were expressive, not only of the present, but of the future: we should inquire, from circumstances, whether the act of washing feet could be symbolical; or whether it appears to have been such from hints thrown out.—How the first Christians acted upon our Saviour's injunction. On these grounds, when we have recollected our own circumstances, our own modes of travelling, our own customs, as to making actions symbolical, must our determinations, with regard to our duty at this time, be formed.

7. Much controversy has arisen about the manner of celebrating the *Lord's supper*.—Jesus took bread

\* See *Wotton's Misna*, Vol. 1. Pref. and Diff. on Sabbatical Texts. *Heylin* has also an elaborate discourse on the Sabbath:—he makes the *Lord's day distinct* from the *Sabbath*: and says it is *no Sabbath*. Bp. Porteus is against Sunday being made *gloomy*, but for its being *religious*. See his Letter on Sunday Schools, p. 23.

† Cave, *Hist. Lit.* Tom. 2. Diff. 2. p. 33. Νίπτει. Barclay, as Quaker, says we should do this to be consistent, if we retain our Ordinance, the Lord's Supper. *Apol.* p. 409. Edit. Birm. 1765.

‡ The Saturnalia had acts of Condescension.

bread and wine after a real meal, or a convivial religious feast : some think we ought therefore to make a meal, of the Lord's supper, or, if we only have the resemblance of a meal, we ought to *fit* at it ; others think, that the thing enjoined is only a commemoration, and as the bread and wine were only taken *after* a meal, and we make an acknowledgement of a stupendous benefit conferred by a Divine person, we ought to use the humblest posture of religious adoration. — The early Christians went on in a plain simple way, with feasts of *caritas*, *αγάπη*, till inconveniencies arose, and then they changed some things, retaining every thing they thought essential. *Wisdom* here must have less influence than *Knowledge* : *σοφία* must be less useful than *γνῶσις*. But how are *we* to act ? — We are to endeavour, even here, to get at general, fundamental principles ; but they will chiefly be found in the manner of instituting the rite : — we have an act, which we dare venture to call a commemoration ; — there seems little reason to doubt its being of a symbolic or emblematical nature ; intended to express our *acceptance* of the benefits of the Death of Christ ; and the consequent remission of our Sins : intended to proclaim all this to all men, whatever language they speak : intended to promote mutual benevolence amongst Christians. — And we can see, from our knowledge of human nature, that acts of gratitude promote sentiments of gratitude ; that periodical commemorations prevent benefits long past from dying away, and sinking into oblivion ; — that a religion, intended to unite all nations and languages, must have some visible signs intelligible to all ; — that finding we have a common interest in any thing great and important, makes us more interested in one another ; and therefore more benevolent and affectionate : perhaps study and attention may teach us more principles :



ciples: our business is, to settle them as far as possible; to consider the Circumstances of the first Christians, and our own; and say, if the ends of such an institution were best answered by people so situated, acting in such a manner, how will they best be answered by us?—It may seem odd, that, amongst the different observers of this rite, there has never been a sect of *accumbers*; our Saviour neither kneeled, \* nor fate, when he instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but was in that posture, which we have no word to express, and which the Romans expressed by using the word *accumbere*.

We might reason in the same manner, concerning the *community of goods* seemingly instituted amongst the very first Christians †;—and concerning the application of recommendations, and instances of *Hospitality*, now that we have *Inns*, and no persecuted Brethren, no common cause of Divine authority in seeming danger: but we will not stop here, as probably no community of goods, strictly speaking, ever did take place amongst Christians;—and *Hospitality*, though a perpetual Duty, has not been remarkably mistaken; has not produced any dissensions.

8. Such is the manner, in which we should apply the directions and narrations of Scripture to our own conduct:—it may be apprehended, that there is some *danger* in allowing such application, upon such calculations: It may be said, “all duties may be evaded thus: a man has only to alledge, that his circumstances are very different from those of the persons to whom the duty was enjoined,

\* Wheatly says, accumbing “was the *Table-gesture* among those Nations.” p. 318.

† Some ancient Christians would not be *baptized* till they were thirty years old, because Christ was not.—Wall on Inf. Bapt. I. II. 7.

enjoined, and he may be exempted from the performance of it."—There is so much meaning in this difficulty, as to require a *caution*, lest men should suffer themselves to be led into evasion and self-deceit, by the kind of reasoning here recommended. There is no liberty, which men in a state of trial may not abuse : but they must not, on that account, be deprived of Liberty. Men's obligations must depend on their situations in Life, and on the several Relations in which they stand : if they *will* mistake, or pretend to mistake, their situations, they must : But those, who mean tolerably well, may be cautioned, that they be thoroughly sincere in determining what is their Duty ; and resolute in performing what proves to be so.—And this Caution must not be confined to the whole of any Duty, taken as one individual thing ; but extended to the several *parts* of it ; nay to the *modes* of performing it ; for, if a man will avoid this mode of performing a Duty, and that mode, and so on, saying, that modes are not essential to the Duty, he may, in turns, avoid all possible modes, and therefore the Duty itself ; for it must be performed after some mode, if it is performed at all. But, if men must not be told the truth, because there is a danger of their abusing it, the Scripture must be left incapable of defence, and liable to do harm, instead of good.

Here it may not be improper to observe, that we have an *instance* of what was mentioned, 1. 1. 7. about the Division of our System into several *distinct parts* : We may now be said to have gone through a *set of Lectures* on the manner of attaining the true *Sense of Scripture*.

The chapters, which follow, may be conceived as furnishing matter for a set of Lectures "*de Veritate Religionis Christianæ* : " to the end of this first Book.



## C H A P. XII.

## OF EXAMINING THE GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF BOOKS ACCOUNTED SACRED.

## INTRODUCTION.

WE have considered the manner of interpreting the Scriptures, taking for *granted* their *Divine Authority*:—but, to see the reasons for concluding them to be Divine, is one great end of researches such as ours.

We might begin with the *Old Testament*; but perhaps a *less difficult* and *equally sure* way would be to begin with the *New*. As the *New* refers to the *Old*, and joins the Christian Dispensation to the Mosaic, (which it would not do, if it did not acknowledge the Authority of the Mosaic), we may be assured, that, when we prove the *New* to be Divine, we in effect prove the *Old* to be so likewise\*.

It is remarkable, as to the *incidental good* it produces, that the *Jews* maintain the authority of the *Old Testament*, and deny that of the *New*:—and the *Jews* and *Christians* are so divided, that their joint testimony in favour of the *Old Testament*, is very strong; without such joint testimony of enemies, Infidels would say, the *Old* and *New Testament* were made to suit each other.

Before we enter into particulars, let us fix upon some *Plan*, which may *unite* our observations, and shew their connexion.

We affirm, that there has been a *Divine Revelation*: “how do you know that?” say our adversaries;—we answer,

i. It

\* See John v. 39.—Heb. x. 1. Heb. ix. 23. Col. ii. 17.

i. It is scarce possible to read the *Scriptures*, without being convinced of it.

ii. The *success*, which their Doctrine met with, confirms our ideas of their Original.

iii. And so also does the *need* there was of them for the instruction and reformation of Mankind.

i. “The *Scriptures*!” say they; “we have seen a book, giving an account of some strange things, but who would pay it any serious attention? what know we of it, or of its *authors*?” In answer, we undertake to prove, that the several books of Scripture are *genuine*; that is, written by the persons to whom they are respectively ascribed.

“But these are obscure authors; at what *time* did they live? They foretel some things; but how know we, that they did not *foretel* events *after* those events came to pass?”—In answer, we say, that we can have the same proof of the time, when the Authors lived, as of their having written the Books.

“But the incidents which they relate, what assurance have we, that they were not mere *Invention*?”—we will give reasons why this supposition is inadmissible.

“Well, suppose these men wrote what they believed, yet they might be *mistaken* as to the things they record?”—we answer, the history they give contains *in itself*, and implies, ample testimony of the principal facts recorded.

“This might be admitted,” say they, “if the writers in question only recorded things in the common course of Nature; but they dwell on *supernatural* events?”—we answer, those supernatural events are themselves *proofs* of the truth of their Relations.—“*Miracles* and prodigies,” say the infidels, “are suspicious things:” and one ingenious Philosopher has thought, that a miracle, as an argument to the human understanding, is an *impossibility*. “But, supposing miracles *could* be per-



formed, and even *proved* in *theory*, yet in *fact*, such proof is not to be *expected*; no real situation can be assigned, in which it is to be found;—nay, suppose a Miracle made credible, what follows? because a man can do what I cannot, or even something beyond the powers of Nature, am I therefore to obey every thing he orders, as if it were divine?” —to all this, we can only reply at present thus; we hope to shew, that the truest Philosophy justifies the use of Miracles on great occasions, in order to convince the mind of Man: That, though strong proof is required to make a miracle credible, yet the Scripture does furnish such as is sufficient; and such as will be owned sufficient by all who calmly estimate the *ability*, the *honesty*, and the *number* of those, who form the Testimony:—That the Miracles of the New Testament had something in them so convincing, and so peculiarly seasonable, as to shew the superintendence of God himself.

But moreover, the Scriptures give accounts of *Prophecies*; of things predicted and completed:—“what superstition,” say the infidels, “ever wanted predictions and prognostications?—but he, who examines yours, will find them ambiguous, obscure, poetical; in a dead language, imperfectly understood, scanty in words, (so that one word means several different things) abounding in tropes and figures, and not discriminating *past and future*;—in writings partly historical, partly poetical:—can sentences so circumstanced convince a reasonable mind? or, if we call them predictions, can any History prove them to have been fulfilled by design?”—We can only reply, that we despair not even here to satisfy the unprejudiced, when we come to lay open the Nature of Prophecy.

ii. In the next place we say, that the Religion, which the Scriptures propose, is divine, because

no religion merely human could have *spread* as it did: supposing the Gospel *true*, its propagation was perfectly natural; supposing it *false*, perfectly unaccountable:—and taking the miracles for *granted*, they shew, that it was God's *intention* to have the Gospel so propagated; the mere consequences of an act of God (if we can ascertain one properly so called) shew the divine \* *intention*.—It may indeed be objected, that, in listening to accounts of the first propagation of Christianity, we give too much credit to the partial accounts of our *Friends*; and too little to the impartial ones of our *Enemies*: but we hope to give satisfaction on these *Heads*, as well as others.

iii. Thirdly and lastly, lest our adversaries should urge, that all the profusion of miracles, and of sufferings, recorded in Scripture, was needless, as men would have improved in moral virtue and natural Religion without them;—we will shew, that it is more just and reasonable to say, that men had real *need* of Revelation, for the purposes of instruction and reformation.

i. We may now begin our *xii*th Chapter with remarking, that all Historical Evidence can only be *probable* evidence: *Demonstration*, properly speaking, is not applicable to the credibility of *facts*.—I would not object to *Huet's* *Demonstratio Evangelica* having definitions, axioms, postulates, propositions;—only, let not the argument be mistaken for one strictly demonstrative. As a principle of *action*, Probability is sufficient; in a state of Trial, it is more to be expected than certainty; as Bp. Butler says, “probability is the very guide of Life †;”—and all we want is to give men a *sufficient* guide for their *conduct*.

If

\* Powell, p. 112.

† Introd. to Analogy, Part 3.



If any one thinks, that we ought to have more than probability to go upon in things of such importance, he should remember, that it is only probable that we shall *die*; it is only probable that the *Sun* will ever rise again. Yet we go upon these things as *Certainties*.

It has been matter of dispute, whether *Morality* is capable of Demonstration; I suppose all that is meant, in such dispute, by demonstration, is shewing, that good *consequences* follow from Virtue: but as consequences are only matter of *experience* and *analogy*, that is only *probable* proof.—

2. In order that we may reason the more intelligibly, let us, first, take notice of some of the *Terms*, which will most frequently occur; such as *genuine*, *authentic*, *apocryphal*, *canonical*.

A work is *genuine*, when it is written by the person whose name it bears: some think *Rowley's* Poems genuine, others not:—from hence it should follow, that no anonymous work could have genuineness either affirmed or denied of it; nevertheless, if a work is what it pretends to be, I think it is called genuine in an enlarged sense. The opposite to genuine is *spurious*, *supposititious*, (*suppositus*, *supposé*, put clandestinely in the place of another, forged,) or in the Greek, *pseudepigraphus*.

*Authentic* means, having authority; a writing may be genuine, and yet not authentic; or authentic, though the word genuine cannot be applied to it. The Poems called *Rowley's* may be genuine, but nothing can be properly said about their being or not being authentic, except perhaps as *proofs* of *Antiquities*, &c.;—whatever is used as authority in *proving*, may be called authentic in some sense. The first Epistle of *Clemens* and the Epistle of *Barnabas* are genuine, but have no authority on which we can build

build Doctrines. On the other hand, writings may be of good *authority*, grounded upon testimonies, experience, arguments, and yet their authors may be wholly unknown. It has been thought\*, that the Books of the New Testament might be proved authentic, though we did not know the Writers of them.

*Apocryphal* seems usually to be opposed to authentic; at least so as to express doubt concerning authenticity: an apocryphal writing is one, whose origin and authority is *doubted*, or *disallowed*, which in this case is nearly the same with *denied*.—But about this word more will occur under the 6th Article of the Church of England. In some titles of ancient Books, there is an ambiguity, which may confound genuine, authentic, and apocryphal. *The preachings of Peter † and Paul* may mean, that Peter and Paul are the Authors; or that they are only the preachers, their preachings being supposed to be recorded by others.—And on other occasions, *spurious* and apocryphal seem to be sometimes confounded; or apocryphal defined spurious‡. But it may often happen, that a writing which is apocryphal, or of doubtful authority, may be spurious also.

*Canonical* is used in divinity to mean part of the *Canon*, or collection of writings of Divine Authority: but the connexion of canonical with the Greek word *Κανων* does not seem to be agreed upon. *Κανων* is a *rule*, but some think that Rule to be the Rule of our Faith and Practice§; so that canonical writings are those, which are to regulate our *Faith and Manners*; others call it a *Balance* to try

\* Dr. Powell, Disc. 4. p. 67.

† Lard. Credib. Works, Vol. 5. p. 417.

‡ Lard. Works, Vol. 2. p. 362. § Richardson, p. 6.



try \* things by; others think, that the Rule is the *Decree* of the Church, made at some Council. This difference is not very material; the Rules here understood are consistent with each other, and with the opinion that the canonical Books are either written or authorized by the *Apostles*. (Richardson, p. 7. Note.)—The word seems to have been *used* because it occurs in Gal. vi. 16. and Phil. iii. 16. This term will also recur under Art. 6. of our Church.

3. The canonical Books are frequently called *inspired* books: it is therefore right to endeavour to ascertain wherein *Inspiration* consists. Yet here, with a view to our own particular method, it may possibly be observed, that this is not the place for entering into controversies about Inspiration, because all our first book professes to be about Theology as common to all Sects of Christians: But there is scarce any point, about which there is not some difference amongst Christians: and this matter of Inspiration does not seem to divide Christians into Sects: We will therefore content ourselves with mentioning a few notions, as we would to Heathens: giving the preference indeed to one, but leaving all Christians to profess their own peculiar notions and systems.

Some men have been of opinion, that *every word* of Scripture was inspired, and therefore that the sacred writers were mere *Instruments*; this Bishop Warburton calls † *organic* inspiration; and I suppose Dr. Priestley means the same by “*plenary* Inspiration;” this seems the *highest* degree of supposed inspiration: the Socinians seem to take the *lowest*: Dr. Priestley says, that St. Paul knew nothing of the

\* Jer. Jones, p. 22. Vol. 1st. On this word, see Lardner's Works, Vol. 6. p. 5.

† Warb. on Grace, p. 43.

the Fall of Man but from the writings of Moses\*; and that his writings “abound with analogies and antitheses, on which no very serious stress is to be laid.” — But such as seem to me the most judicious and learned men, suppose, that the sacred writers were informed supernaturally as to the substance of the Christian Scheme, and were left to their own habits of speaking as far as related to the modes of expression; only care was taken by Providence, that they did not necessarily lead men into any material error; the Rule they published being to stand as an † infallible rule; as a *Criterion*, by which all notions and opinions, as well as practices, were to be tried.

After the pretensions which St. Paul makes, in the opening of his Epistle to the Galatians, there seems no medium; he must either be an Impostor, or furnished with supernatural knowledge. He cannot speak of things above man's comprehension as a mere Man. In 1 Cor. vii, he distinguishes between what he says of *himself*, and what he says from his *Lord*: Paul had never any intercourse with Christ but what was *supernatural*. And this may seemingly be applied to the other sacred writers: had they set themselves on recording the acts and sayings of Christ during his life-time, they might have been on the same footing with other Historians; but they received their commission ‡ *after the Death* of Christ; they profess to have received it supernaturally; either they did so, or they are Impostors.—There is no writer, that I know of, who says what is so much to the purpose on this subject,  
in

\* Letter to Dr. Price, p. 159. Birm. 1787. But see the motto to Mr. Ormerod's Book against Dr. Priestley: from *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*.

† Warburton, p. 45, 46. Richardson, p. 8.

‡ Powell, p. 248.



in so small a compass, as *Dr. Powell*; in the opening of his 4th and 15th Discourses.

With regard to the *continuance* of Inspiration, it seems as if we might form some Analogy, from the account which we find of Spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. Chap. xiv.—There, it appears, that men had a power of speaking languages supernaturally; and the most judicious (in my estimation) think, that a man who spoke a foreign language so, was upon the same footing with those, who had learnt that language naturally: like as a man who was once miraculously healed of lameness, continued to walk as if he had been healed in an ordinary \* way.—*Dr. Middleton* held, that Inspiration was temporary and occasional; but this notion appears improbable, because those, who had the power of speaking a foreign language for the sake of being *understood*, *abused* that power, and spoke that language, through ostentation, to those who did not understand it: now, it is not to be conceived, that the words would be suggested miraculously, by a particular inspiration, when they were *abused*; though such abuse might be *permitted*, when a man knew the language as a language is commonly known.—And, if the knowledge of a language was communicated all together, as one thing, is it not likely, that the knowledge of the Christian *scheme* would be communicated entire, in like manner? such a simple communication is rather to be allowed, than a complex and reiterated communication; than a series of miracles. *Dr. Middleton's* opinion, therefore, that Inspiration was temporary and occasional, seems not probable.

It may perhaps be said, that referring the sacred writings to the Divine Influence, is only a pious mode of expression, and implies no distinct fact.

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\* Warburton on the Spirit, p. 21.

This may be sometimes the case: Richardson \* mentions some instances, which agree with what will be laid down under Art. 10th of the Church† of England. But the way, in which the Apostles became inspired, implies an higher degree of Inspiration: however, it does not seem our business to ascertain exactly in what degree the Apostles were inspired; we probably are incapable of finding that out, or even of understanding it with precision: in Scripture, we see the *effects*; we must conceive the Inspiration to have been something capable of producing those effects, and perhaps we can get no nearer. And I know not whether all parties do not, at the bottom, though they may not always be conscious of it, follow this plan, of reasoning from effect to cause; each seems to settle the nature and degree of inspiration, so that it shall be sufficient to account for what he deems the true sense of Scripture. This imperfection of our knowledge may afford a farther excuse for treating the subject of Inspiration out of its proper place.

4. Before we come to a direct proof, that the Books of the Scripture are genuine, we must remove a difficulty out of the way; and that is, what arises from the multitude of Books which, we are told, in early times of Christianity, were kind of competitors with the Books now reckoned Canonical.—Let us state the fact, before we reason upon it.—In our own times, we have the Books of Scripture in one Volume, and no skill is required to distinguish them from others; but, in the earliest times of Christianity, the few sacred writings subsisting, were dispersed; read in one church, and not known in another; and for one that was really sacred, there  
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were

\* Canon of New Testament vindicated, p. 29.

† Book 4. Art. (or Chap.) 10. Sect. 39.



were perhaps ten or more, that either pretended to be so, or were quoted with respect by the Fathers, or read in Christian Assemblies: (and moreover, in some persecutions, it was forbidden to have the Scriptures in possession :) how can we be sure, that we have not admitted some of these inferior writings into our Canon, or rejected some which ought to have been admitted?—In answer to this Question, we must describe the Books here spoken of more particularly.

i. First, the *Antilegomena* or seven controverted parts of the New Testament\* may be mentioned, which were not generally received till after the rest, and are not yet, I think, except Hebrews and James, received by the Christians in Syria †.—ii. Then, there were some Books called *Ecclesiastical* ‡, such as were not reckoned of Divine Authority, but were read in Churches, as pious and edifying. The Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the first Epistle of Clement, were of this number: and the word *Scripture* was applied to them §; they were spoken of as *γραφή*, or eminent, distinguished writings.—iii. It seems also far from improbable, that many sayings of Christ and his Apostles were got by hearing || them repeated frequently by one to another, and so at last written down in some composition of some Christian writer.—iv. Moreover, it is natural to think that, during our Saviour's *life time*, some sincere well-meaning Christians might *immediately* make † memorandums of what

\* The Epistle to the Hebrews, that of James, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Book of Revelation.

† Richardson, p. 18. ‡ Ibid. p. 19.

§ Homily, 8vo. p. 76. 136. 303. Or Richardson, p. 27. and Lardner.

|| Richardson, p. 91. See Acts 20. 35.

† Richardson, p. 92.

what they themselves had heard our Saviour say, and seen him do: to such records as these *St. Luke* seems to refer, in the opening of his Gospel: these were written, before the famous day of Pentecost, and without any divine *commission*.—v. And some might contain accounts of the *Apostles*, and not of Christ. The *Apostolic* \* *constitutions* and *Canons* are now in being; in part at least they are plainly spurious; but there are some men of judgment, who have thought that the ground-work of them might be genuine†.—So far the writings mentioned might now be worthy of attention; might be accounted genuine, though not authentic: but vi. There were others, composed by men weak and foolish: in order to recommend Christianity to the Gentiles, by an additional number of Miracles, by enlarging narrations, and adding circumstances. And vii. Some by Christian *heretics*, in order to justify their several tenets; the Manicheans adopted and rejected what parts of the New Testament they pleased‡; and there were Gospels of the *Valentinians*, the Gospel of *Basilides*, &c. I think, in all, there have been reckoned up forty Gospels, and thirty-six writings of the nature of the Acts of the Apostles. If we want a general motive for men's composing false Gospels and Acts, we may assign as such the desire of making the sacred narratives more *particular*, and the revealed notion of virtue more sublime, pure, &c.—Lardner speaks nearly thus Vol. 6. p. 401.—Some Heretics wanted to defend their peculiar Doctrines,—but many, only “to elevate and surprize.”—viii. We may, besides, mention compositions such as that of *Salvian*§, which he published  
as

\* Richardson, p. 93. † Ibid.

‡ Lard's Works, Vol. 3. p. 518.

§ Lard. Credib. 2. 811. Works, Vol. 2. p. 361.



as Timothy's, through a kind of *Modesty* \*, meaning no harm; well written, and of intrinsic value: and some may add to this class the pretended works of Dionysius, the *Areopagite*.—ix. There are several *anonymous* writings published *later* in the Church, written in some sort of *imitation* of something already much esteemed; such as the Epistle to *Diognetus*, ascribed to Justin Martyr, which is called elegant; and the Acts of *Perpetua and Felicitas*, who suffered in the persecution under Severus, which is said to be affecting; and there have been many spurious works ascribed to Cyprian, and other Fathers; but, as these did not interfere with the settling of the Canon of the New Testament, we need descend no lower. This last sort of writings and the next before it might make *one class*; only that the *motive* of writing such works as Salvian's, wants distinguishing. Moreover, it has no imitation, as the last sort has.

We see then what it is which Authors undertake, who profess to treat of the Canon of the New Testament; and that their undertaking requires reading and critical skill. *Fabricius*, a Professor at Hamburgh, who died in 1736, the learned author of

\* This does not seem quite a clear statement. Salvian published a Discourse on Avarice, under the name of *Timotheus*;—Christians immediately said, is this written by Timotheus, to whom St. Paul addressed two Epistles? there is not sufficient proof of that; therefore, if this Discourse pretends to be by that Timotheus, it must be classed with *apocryphal* books: Bishop *Salonius* writes to Salvian (his quondam preceptor) to ask him about this matter; Salvian, in answer, explains 1. Why he wrote to the Church at all. 2. Why he did not put his own name to his Discourse; through modesty, &c. 3. Why he put the name of *Timotheus*;—he meant it only as a name expressing *Honor of God*, as *Theophilus* was a name expressing *Love of God*.—He much dreaded all *falsehood*; every one *must know*, that his discourse was not written by St. Paul's Timotheus:—it was a book merely for *Instruction*, then what signified the name? &c. —See Salvian to Salonius.

of the Bibliotheca Græca, and Latina, has composed a *Codex Pseudepigraphus*, containing Books, which interfere with the Canon of the Old Testament; and a *Codex Apocryphus*, containing Books, which interfere with the Canon of the New Testament. — — Mr. *Jeremiah Jones* has made a complete collection \* of spurious Gospels, &c. with English Translations; and has prefixed to them sensible and acute remarks. *Lardner* has taken notice of the Subject, in the fifth Volume of his Works; and of the Canon of the New Testament in the sixth Volume. — In 1699 Mr. *Toland* published a Book called *Amyntor*, in which he makes all possible use of the writings here spoken of, to overthrow the Authority of the New Testament; — the answer by *John Richardson* (once Fellow of Emmanuel College) lets us easily into this part of Theological Learning, and, I should think, must satisfy every candid judgment.

5. If it be asked, in a summary way, how we are to clear the Canon of the New Testament from these inferior compositions, and set it above them, as of Divine Authority; we answer, by distinguishing between what was written or authorized by *Apostles*, and all other writings; between what was reckoned authentic, and what was thought only edifying; between what was quoted as proof, and what was quoted on account of fine sentiment or beautiful expression, as we quote from Shakespeare, &c. — between what is absurd or contradictory, and what is rational and consistent: between what is supported by fanciful Heretics, affecting singularity and novelty; and what is supported by the most numerous, sober-minded, and learned part of the Church. — *Other Criteria* may occur in reading *Richardson's Book*: — or that of *Jones*†.

Hence

\* Leland, speaking of Toland, calls the collection complete.

† Jones, Vol. 1. p. 87.



Hence it follows, that the writings here spoken of do not really justify the infidel in rejecting the Scriptures: In the first place, it is probable, that infidels generally neglect most of the distinctions just now proposed as criteria; which clearly cannot be justified:—but it may suffice to refer to Lardner, who has treated this subject in the place above \* cited:—with regard to those compositions, which would be most disgraceful to Christianity, if admitted as authentic, he observes, that these “books were not much used by the Primitive Christians;”—that they confirm, in reality, “the evangelical History,” as they are forgeries, affectations, *imitations*; and, of course, the thing imitated must be something valuable and honourable; they also specify the *names* of Peter, Paul, &c.; nay, they profess respect for them. “Few or none of these books were composed before the beginning of the second Century.”—“The Case of the Apostles of Christ is not singular:” “divers orations were falsely ascribed to Demosthenes and Lyfias”—Dinarchus, Plautus, have had the same compliment paid to them: a part of Criticism, Greek and Roman, is employed in separating genuine writings from spurious—but no one has writings falsely ascribed to him, who is not very much celebrated †.

A few *instances* are wanted here: perhaps the Letter to Jesus Christ from *Abgarus* King of Edeffa might be one; as it has been thought genuine. *Abgarus* was a name (like Ptolemy, Pharaoh, &c.) by which several Kings of Edeffa were called.—This Letter and the answer of Christ are treated by Lardner ‡ in his Testimonies, and by J. Jones;—other || instances

\* Lard. *Works*, Vol. 5. p. 412.

† See, besides what was quoted before, Lard. *Works*, Vol. 3. p. 536. and contents of Chapter, p. 493.

‡ Lard. *Works*, 7. 223. Jer. Jones, Vol. 2. beginning.

|| See Mosheim's tables at the end of his *Eccles. History*.

instances might be, the Gospel of Nazarenes; as that has been spoken of, Chap. vi. from Jones \*. — The Gospel of our Savior's *Infancy* †, and the Gospel of *Mary*, or Protevangelion of *James* ‡. — What Dr. Powell || says of the seven controverted pieces may be extended to the best of these: "the chief arguments for the Truth of our Religion are not connected with the determinations of these nicer questions; the History of Christ and his Apostles, and the proofs of their divine authority, being contained in Books which were never controverted."

6. Having then, as we should hope, removed the spurious and Apocryphal writings out of the way, or pointed out the method by which the studious may remove them, let us go on to consider the *genuineness* of those Writings, which we judge to have Apostolical Authority. —

7. Our business here is properly with Unbelievers, but it may be right to mention, that some sects of *Christians* have declared the Scriptures of the New Testament to be in many places corrupted. The § *Manicheans* did this in the greatest degree; but the truth of the matter seems to be, that they allowed every thing in the New Testament, which did not interfere with their own peculiar Opinions; they allowed our Savior's Parables, Discourses, &c. but not his being born of a *material* substance, nor his being circumcised, nor his sacrificing like an Heathen, nor his being really crucified. They also rejected all the quotations of the Old Testament found in the New; because they rejected the Old Testament: all these they rejected, as giving an account of nature and of Christ, inconsistent with their

\* Jones, Vol. 1. p. 374.

† Jones, Vol. 2. p. 191.

‡ Jones, Vol. 2. p. 276.

|| Powell's Discourses, p. 72.



their notions of the evil principle in *Matter*. And other very ancient Sects of Christians acted in the same manner, on similar principles\*.

I believe, it is not needful for us to say more, in answer to any charge of ancient Sects against the genuineness of the New Testament; they could not say, that Christ or his Apostles taught any thing wrong, or any thing which was not of divine authority; for even the Manicheans were real Christians; so that they had nothing for it but saying, that any thing, which they could not admit, was *interpolated*; but there is something so arbitrary and foolish, in thus condemning every thing which did not suit their preconceived notions, and erasing it at once out of the sacred Code, that their conduct will scarce be followed as an example †; nevertheless, if any one should suspect they might have more to say for themselves than we now allow, he may consult Augustin's works; he may see what Faustus their Bishop had to urge; and he may be led to see, what is of more consequence, Augustin's fine writing against them.—Mr. Richardson has translated, and Dr. Lardner has quoted some passages worthy to be read and admired on this subject; which indeed go farther than to answer Faustus, and may now be useful, in proving the genuineness of the Books of the New Testament against infidels.—An additional reason why we do not enter farther into Controversy with the Manicheans, and other sects, though they seem to come directly in our way, is, that they could not be said to deny the authority of the Scriptures as such; whatever they acknowledged

\* See Lardner's *Heresies*. B. 1. Sect. 10. or *Works*, Vol. 9. p. 250. and elsewhere.

† Martin Luther wished to dispute the Authority of the General Epistle of James, because it pressed hard upon his Notion of Justification by Faith.

ledged to be Scripture, they acknowledged to be divine : and the parts they rejected, must have amounted to much less than those they received. — Let us then return to our reasoning with *unbelievers*.

8. In reasoning about the genuineness of any writing, as Rowley's Poems, the Εἰκὼν Βασιλική, or any other, we usually dwell much on internal marks, as stile, expression, &c. ; but our first business in the present case is, to consider the *external* evidence of the genuineness of the Books of the New Testament :—and that might carry us unto discussions of great length : in order to keep ourselves as unembarrassed as may be, let us first consider the form and nature of the argument, before we enter upon such particulars, as may come within the limits of our present undertaking.

The arguments, by which the genuineness of the Books of the New Testament is proved, are very well proposed and expressed in Dr. Powell's 4th Discourse : I do not take the thoughts quite in the same *order*, but dispose them with a view to what follows in these Lectures.—If credit is to be given to *any* writings that are ancient, as being written by the persons whose names they bear, because they come down to us ascribed to those persons, credit is certainly to be given to the Books of the New Testament, as the works of St. Matthew and the other sacred writers ; nay, we may expect them to be owned as genuine more readily than the writings of the Heathens, because more persons have concurred in ascribing them to their reputed authors, than in ascribing works to Heathens : and those more dispersed through the world, and more tempted to deny their genuineness.—As to the *identity* of the Books in question, as to their being the same now with those of which the ancients spake, we cannot doubt it, if we think on the



number of Manuscripts, Versions, Quotations, and Comments, which the researches of learning bring to our view ; and these independent of each other ; incapable of being conceived the effects of any design to impose upon the world. Neither is there any chasm or interval, during which the Testimonies of which we speak are not exhibited ; they begin from the personal friends and acquaintance of the writers, from those who in person were instructed by them ; and are continued down to us in an uninterrupted succession. Neither were these Testimonies given only to those of the same party with the Witnesses themselves ; some of them were given in the most public manner possible, to men of different descriptions ; they were received with approbation by an innumerable company of *friends* ; they were uncontradicted even by *enemies*. Nay, the genuineness of the Books of the New Testament was expressly acknowledged by enemies possessed of all human sources of information, particularly able and uncommonly desirous to disprove and deny it.

9. Such is the form and nature of the argument : but a Student will wish for more exact and particular information : he must, therefore, be put into a way to acquire it. Our Testimonies come from *Friends*, or *Enemies* ;—the Friends are the *Christians*, the Enemies are the *Heathens* : though there are some Heathens, whose Testimonies can scarce be called that of either Friends or professed Enemies ; who only mention circumstances and events, as they happened to come in the way.

With regard to the Testimonies of *Friends*, we can scarce take a better method than explaining the nature and use of *Lardner's Credibility* of the Gospel History : adding a short account of his ancient *Testimonies*.

He

He begins with examining the facts, that are *occasionally* mentioned in the New Testament, such as the acts of the Governors of Judea, the tenets of the Jewish Sects, the Roman customs, &c.;—and he shews, that such facts are agreeable to what is recorded by the best ancient Historians nearest the time spoken of, and who give the accounts most to be depended on: He observes, that the Books, which contain these facts, were believed; that men changed their Religion, in consequence of what is contained in them.—His conclusion is, that the sacred writers must have written what they knew; and that, at the time pretended, viz. before the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in year 70: because it would have been impossible for any one writer to have copied the manners of eight; and it must be incredible, that eight so different, so separated, could have combined together to deceive the world; nay, if they had, that they could have, at any distance of time, composed an account of things of a public nature, said to have happened so long ago, which would appear so like reality, as to induce people to make any important changes in their way of Life.—Then, if they *did* write the Gospels *at the time* pretended, the facts must have been TRUE: nobody in such a case could have admitted false facts; at least not such facts, and attended with such consequences. And, if the facts related in the Gospels are *true*, the Christian Revelation must be *divine*.—*So much is dispatched in one Volume*;—the contents of it rather incroach upon some subjects to be treated hereafter, but our account of the work before us ought to be complete.—This one Volume makes the *first part*: the *second part* consists of several volumes: it is intended to prove the credibility of the *principal* facts of the New Testament by the Testimony of the *Christian*



*Fathers*: of all, or nearly all, the Fathers of the first four centuries, and of the chief ones down to the beginning of the 12th century. By the *principal* facts of the New Testament, he means those relating to St. John Baptist, Jesus Christ, his Apostles, &c.—His Method is, to give first a short History of each Father, referring to others, who give one more full: then to discuss any thing singular in the character, writings, opinions of that Father, and clear up any doubts about them; then lastly, having thus thrown all light upon the Testimony, and set it in a right point of view, to produce the Testimony itself;—that is, to shew what scriptures that Father owned, quoted, alluded to:—this he does with very commodious recapitulations, and other helps of divisions, indexes, &c.

To this is added a copious and elaborate *Supplement*, in which he treats of the canon of the New Testament, and of every thing relating to the publication of it; and gives very good accounts of the Lives of the eight writers: which lives are excellent helps towards understanding their works.

There is, besides, his *ancient Testimonies* of Jews and Heathens; in which he quotes every thing in Jewish and Heathen Antiquity, that has any relation to Christianity; after setting it in a right light, by letting his reader into all circumstances of time, place, and the characters of the Authors.—*Pliny* writes about Christians; who was Pliny? what kind of man? in what station? when? where? do his writings go *for* or *against* Christianity?—&c.—What knowledge of Christianity do they shew? such are the questions which he answers.

The manner of this writer gives me *pleasure*, as well as satisfaction; he is clear, easy, accurate, and candid: he has been \* called “the *laborious* Lardner,”

\* By Bp. Hallifax. Lardner himself uses “*laborious*” as a compliment; to Warburton and others.

ner," and laborious he must have been ; but yet he never seems to *me* to labour ; he is always smooth and unembarrassed ; you go through a volume without feeling any fatigue ; reading half a pamphlet of some men's writing, would require a much greater effort. I would observe of him, more particularly, that, when he quotes a passage out of an ancient *Father*, you are at first shocked and disgusted with something superstitious or weak in it ; but, when he comes to take it to pieces, and shew the circumstances in which it was written, you recover your feelings, and generally your esteem for the *Father* ; for, if you still think the passage faulty in itself, in some respects, you have learnt how to make proper allowances.—This remark may properly enough introduce the subject, which is next to be treated ; namely, the views, with which we are to peruse those ancient Christian writers, who are usually called the *Fathers*.

10. The imperfections of the *Fathers*, we affirm, have occasioned their being read with too little attention : this has not always been the case ; in some ages, too much attention has been paid them : but in all ages, I think, some knowledge of them has been accounted a qualification of the Divine : and in all controversies, I believe, each party has wished to have the *Fathers* \* on his side.—It seems an unaccountable thing beforehand, that men of literature should have engaged themselves totally in the cause of Christianity, should have written copiously and fervently in defence of it's doctrines, so as to excite the admiration of their own times, and yet that their works should not now be worth looking into :—on the other hand, that mere men should be followed implicitly, in spite of the improvements of later ages in knowledge, human and  
divine,

\* Monthly Review for June 1783. Art. 7. beginning.



divine, is a thing not rashly to be admitted:—if then we are neither to neglect the Fathers, nor let their judgment supersede our own, what notion are we to entertain of their merits at this time?—In order to get some satisfaction on this question, let us consider the Fathers in four different lights:

As records of Christian Antiquity.

As preachers of Christian Virtue.

As expositors of Holy Writ.

As defenders of the true Christian Doctrine.

II. As repositories of *Antiquity*, they are certainly well worth reading; there is no practice of the ancient Christian Churches, which may not be made useful in modern times, if rightly applied; allowing for difference of circumstances: and even spurious and anonymous works may answer our purpose here, nearly as well as those that are genuine; so long as we are not deceived as to the time when any sentence or passage was really written. Christians are to improve by experience, as well as other men; and experience can only be had from past events. Amongst things particularly to be noticed, we may mention, 1. *Ancient Customs*, as suppose, ceremonies of Ordination, Baptism, Lord's Supper, ranks of Officers, Discipline, &c. &c.:—2. *Ancient Doctrines* or Opinions, such as those concerning the nature and dignity of Christ; and of the Holy Spirit; with his assistance, ordinary and extraordinary; concerning the divine government and decrees:—the efficacy of the Sacraments, &c. . . what those opinions were, is intirely a separate inquiry from what they ought to have been.—3. We should notice *Ancient Scriptures*, or what Books were referred to by each Father; what as authentic, what as only useful, pious, or virtuous:—In this part of our study of the Fathers, the principal caution regards the doctrines. When men speak  
on

on any subject, without foreseeing Disputes, they use words with less care than they would do if actually engaged in disputes : and, when words so used are afterwards quoted, those who used them seem to have meant more than they really did : they are brought as favoring one side or the other, when they really favored neither ; no had any idea, properly speaking, of the question in debate — .. *Trinitas* did not at first imply what we now mean by *Trinity*.

The agreement \* of all the Fathers, extremely dissentient in lesser matters, on the great points of Redemption, Sanctification, Immortality, must be a very strong argument in favor of Christianity and its *fundamental* Doctrines.

12. As *preachers* of Christian Virtue, we may now read the Fathers, in many parts, with great profit, if we enter upon the work with a right idea of them.—The Christian religion was to them every thing : they devoted themselves to it with heart and soul : their devout affections were excited and inflamed to a degree not now often observable in ordinary life : this being their character, when we read their pious meditations, their praises of virtue, and their exhortations to sanctity, we may catch a spirit of Piety and Virtue, which we in vain should attempt to attain amidst the embarrassments of Business, or the dissipations of Pleasure.

But, if we confide in the Fathers as understanding Virtue very *systematically*, we may be deceived : God leaves Virtue to improve gradually, as well as other things. The Fathers are to be conceived as having explained the practical Virtue and Piety of the Gospel, or as having applied general precepts  
to

\* Que parmi tant de diversitez ils adorent tous un mesme Christ ; pressent tous une mesme sanctification, esperent tous une mesme immortalité. Daillé. p. 518.



to particular cases, according to the state of morality established in their own times respectively; but we have not ground for saying, that they gave themselves to estimating the consequences of actions by observation or experiment, and thereby improving the received morality, and forming new Rules of Virtue; or to refining and directing the moral sense. Hence some things, which they approved, might now be disapproved; and every thing ought to be examined.—Our business then is, to catch the *warmth* of their Virtue and Piety; and, allowing for the imperfections incident to the times in which they lived, to make that warmth operate to the greatest possible advantage in our own times.—If we could make the People *feel* at this time, what Ambrose made the People feel at Milan, or Gregory at Nazianzum, or Leo the Great at Rome, or John Chrysostom at Constantinople, and then direct them with our most improved morality, we might do great service to the cause of Virtue, that is, to the happiness of Mankind.—To quote particulars, would carry us into too great length; but, I think, there are religious and moral passages in some of the Fathers, which are truly beautiful, and greatly affecting; I shall rather produce and recommend them occasionally, than systematically.

13. As *Expositors* of Scripture we may profit by the Fathers, if we are aware of their imperfections, and do not expect that from them, which they could not have.—What was said before is now again applicable; the Fathers applied themselves to the reading of the Scriptures, with undivided attention, with intense thought and holy admiration, as to what alone was worthy to be studied. No part of Scripture was neglected by them; they were so earnestly intent upon it, that not a jot or tittle escaped them. This, with the advantages they had

had in point of languages \* and antiquities, could not fail to produce remarks, which it must be very imprudent in any age to neglect. Criticism improves indeed, in the same natural progression with other things; there is no kind of mental improvement, which does not improve criticism: polite arts refine our feelings and taste, science our judgment; and reflex observations on these improvements, and other phænomena of human nature, improve both taste and understanding.

It may be thought, that this is representing taste and criticism as in a more advanced state now, than in the Augustan age: I believe, they are; but it is not necessary to settle that matter; we have no scriptural comments of the Augustan age; if we could have had, they would probably have been valuable; but, before the principal of our comments were written, taste had degenerated; and the Scriptures had seemingly been read with too little critical skill and attention:—more of that skill might have prevented that excess of allegorical interpretation, into which some ancients ran: They were probably led into it by studying, with a warm imagination, Prophecies, and Types, and Parables, and Allusions; by our Savior's not opening the whole of his Plan during his Life-time;—but it is our business to determine, as nearly as we are able, when the interpretation of Scripture should be plain, and when it should be understood as implying something beyond the Letter.

The *result* is, we must expect to find modern criticism fall in more with our modern notions than ancient; and, in many cases, we have really improved upon the ancient, though sometimes by its assistance;—but still we must be aware, that there may be fashionable errors at any time; and that  
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\* It is not meant here, that the *Latin* Fathers understood *Greek* well.



the ideas which are familiar to us, when we hear certain expressions, were not always what those expressions would have suggested in our Savior's time—Be it that Mr. *Locke* has best explained *St. Paul's* Epistles \*; his explanation may not supersede all attention to remarks of the ancients on particular passages: were any one about to see whether Mr. *Locke* could not be improved upon, I apprehend he should consult the ancients occasionally; though possibly they may afford greater help on other parts of Scripture, than on those which Mr. *Locke* has explained.

14. As *Defenders* of the pure Christian Faith, or, in other words, as polemic divines, the Fathers may still be read with improvement: for some old heresies seem to be extinct, when the seeds of them remain, ready to spring forth at any time. The causes of Heresies seem permanent: such as abhorrence of particular tenets; perplexity about some mysterious doctrine; tenderness for sinners;—zeal for Scripture, for Reason, for the honor of the Deity;—desire of novelty; pride of taking the lead;—most heresies have arisen from one or other of these causes; and these causes may, at any future time, produce the same effects with some trifling variations.—But even those ancient heretical notions, which have so decayed that they occasion no wars or violent contentions at present, are opposed in *Creeeds* and other confessions of Faith; these ought to be *understood*; and we find very nearly the same notions every now and then breaking out into Controversy. In such a case, it is very useful to be able to trace the deviations of the human mind through a succession of ages: an error thus traced, has a very different appearance from the same error seen only at one single time.—

I should

\* Dr. Balguy, Charge 1st. (p. 175).

I should think it would be acknowledged, from the passages which occur in Bp. Pearson on the Creed, that the Ancients express themselves well on controverted subjects, and shew a depth and clearness of reasoning, where the question requires it.

There is, however, an Acrimony in the ancient controversialists, which we may pardon sometimes, but which we ought never to imitate: we may pardon it, when it seems to arise from a zeal for what is good, though a zeal not founded in knowledge: Men, taking for granted the justness of their Opinions, fancy that they ought to treat all opposition to them as treason to the Majesty of God; as insult upon his Son: whereas, two men cannot in reality be contending about any thing more than the comparative value of two *human* judgements; they can only weigh fallibility against fallibility: and, since every church has a right to judge for itself, no attack should be used on one side, which should not be allowed on the other.—Possibly those Fathers, who indulged too much acrimony, might follow unthinkingly what they find in the *Old Testament* about severity to Idolatrous Nations; or some terms of reproach used in the New: but, if they did, they did not consider sufficiently difference of circumstances.—When, therefore, we consult the Fathers, with a view to controversy, we may apply their arguments, as far as they are applicable to the question; avoiding their acrimonious invectives \*.—When we compare a modern controversy with an ancient one, we discern frequently from what common cause they proceeded; and

\* It is but justice to allow, that there cannot be a finer precept about controversy than that of Augustin's quoted by Lardner, from No. 4. of Contr. Epist. Foundationis.—See Lardner's Works, Vol. 3. p. 545. The passage immediately before it is also very good: "Illi in vos sæviant," &c.



and seeing that, as it enlarges our views, has a tendency to abate contention.—As a Corollary, we may remark, that we ought to be very cautious of adopting any accounts of the tenets of Heretics, from their adversaries. I fear the cases are much too numerous, in which this caution would be useful.

15. And now, if we review our directions about reading the Fathers, we shall find them reducible to *one*:—We must make *allowances* for the *circumstances*, in which the Fathers wrote. If we follow this direction, we shall find an Apology for what has, in *fact*, occasioned the *greatest* dislike to them: and that is, their recounting *superstitious Stories* of miracles, and spirits, and judgments.—The charge seems something of this sort:—either the Fathers believed the stories, or not; if they believed them, they were weakly *credulous*; if not, they were false and *deceitful*.—The truth seems to be, that they were guilty, in some degree, of *both* these faults; sometimes they were too credulous, sometimes they gave into a degree of pious fraud.—Can this be allowed, and yet any sufficient Apology be made for them? let us try; first, with regard to *pious fraud*; then, with regard to *credulity*.

As to *pious fraud*, it might take place either when they partly believed, or when they could not be said to believe at all. When men *partly* believe, they can deceive themselves, so as to lessen their blame of themselves, especially when their insincerity is all intended to promote the cause of Religion.—In a fit of *zeal*, not only religious, but political, or even scientific men are often capable of admitting a great deal of Sophistry; they neglect to sift their motives of conduct, and push forward towards their desired end. I do not say, this is right, but it is what men often do, who are generally accounted men of good character; it is only  
on

on this footing the Fathers are in some degree excusable; because they are no worse than other grave and regular men. Suppose that, in some cases, they cannot be said to believe even in part, then it seems more difficult to excuse them. But we can say, that pious fraud must have had great power of seducing, when it was little blamed; indeed, we seldom expect more of men, than that they should follow established maxims of Virtue. Mosheim\* tells us, that the Platonists (Christians so called, as I understand) "asserted the innocence of defending the truth by artifice and falsehood;" and "this method" "was" "almost universally approved." Nay, it was so established, as to have a name; to do a thing on this footing was to do it *œconomically*†, κατ' οἰκονομίαν.—Those who fell short of this degree of falsehood, might yet imagine, that, if they could any way convert a sinner, heaven would reward them; or that the sinner himself would be thankful, as a man is, who has been cheated into a place of safety, when he was intoxicated.—In common life, we often find things tending this way. Connoisseurs in paintings, antiquities, &c. are sometimes thieves and corruptors of Servants, &c. if they be not misrepresented: those who preside in a national religion are apt to have views to the effects of truth, instead of desiring the truth simply; and to encourage any popular defences of their own tenets: Reasons of State might be mentioned here.—When a man feels his enthusiasm successful, there springs up in his mind a wish to make some political use‡ of it, &c.

16. But

\* Cent. 3. Part 2. Chap. 3. Sect. 10.—8vo. Vol. 1. p. 282.

† Gataker ad M. Antonini, lib. xi. p. 330, &c.—quoted in Mosheim, ibidem.

‡ Bishop Warburton somewhere talks of the Roguery, that is apt to mix itself with Enthusiasm.



16. But to come to the charge of *credulity*.—Now credulity at one *time* should not be judged by light obtained at a subsequent time. Incredulity is the very same fault with credulity; both consist in preferring a lower degree of probability to an higher: to avoid both is to judge as well as possible in given circumstances; it seems, therefore, as if it would be a complete vindication of the Fathers, if the wisest men of their times were as credulous as themselves\*.—The *elder Pliny*, who wrote the Natural History, died about the year 79: the *younger Pliny* flourished early in the second century; Lardner makes him to be in his Province of Pontus and Bithynia from 106 to 108.—*Plutarch* died before the middle of the second century; and the Emperor *Julian* after the middle of the fourth:—these men were in high estimation, and yet their superstition and credulity seem to have been equal to that of the Christian Fathers. Even *Lucian*, that great ridiculer of superstitious folly, seems to have had a *Vision*, when he wanted to run away from his Master: his Master was a Statuary and his Uncle.

*Pliny Senior* was so superstitious, that his Editor, *Hardouin*, speaks of his superstition as a *topic* in the Preface, (not far from the end) and makes an apology for it, which adds to the force of our argument; namely, that *other* authors had recorded as strange things as he. He speaks (Nat. Hist. 2. 30.) of *eclipses*, as owing to Cæsar's Death, and the Antonine war; and as having continued in some degree almost a year. At the opening of the second Book he calls the *World* a Deity:—He speaks (Lib. 7. Cap. 52, or 53) of dead people's reviving, and makes a general observation, "*hæc est conditio mortalium.*"

\* See Hume's Natural History of Religion, Sect. 12. p. 464. Svo, about the superstition of *Pompey*, &c.

mortalium.”—“*Fæminarum sexus*,” says he, “*huic malo videtur maximè opportunus*,” that is, for lying dead a long time before reviving;—and then he adds a foolish reason, taken from the corrugation of the *Uterus*. (P. 408 of Vol. I. Hardouin.)

*Pliny Junior* was extremely superstitious. For a proof of this, it will be quite sufficient to refer to his *Epistle to Sura*\*, describing some as good Ghosts, as ever old woman believed in; and professing himself inclined to give credit to them; or rather, saying that he does give credit to them, though he desires the judgment of his correspondent: more instances of his superstition are to be found in *Lardner's* ancient Testimonies†.

*Plutarch* admits the same train of ideas with *Pliny Senior*. In *Bishop Pearson* ‡ on the Creed, we have an expression quoted from a treatise intitled, in Latin, “*De his qui serò puniuntur*,” in which we find the following story; (pretty near the end.) *Thespesius*, who belonged to *Soli* (in Cyprus, or Cilicia,) had been very vicious, and had been told by an Oracle, that he would be better, after he had been dead. He fell from an height and dislocated his neck, and revived the third day, just as they were going to bury him.

*Julian's* superstition seems to have appeared chiefly in his great anxiety about sacrificing to the Heathen Deities. The account of it in *Lardner's* Testimonies

\* *Plin. Ep. Lib. 7. Ep. 27.*

† *Works, Vol. 7. p. 330.*

‡ *Pearson on the Creed, p. 528, 4to, or p. 261, folio. Art. 5. about Third day.*

By looking into *Lardner's* Testimonies, many instances might be found of superstitious Stories in sensible Heathen Writers of the 4th Century, &c. Not to mention *Philostratus*, who might have a design; See *Lardner's* Articles (*Works, Vol. 9*) of *Zosimus*, *Marinus*, and *Damascius*.



nies seems sufficient, and to that therefore I will refer\*.

I might mention Socrates† and Plato‡, had they not lived too long before the Fathers; I might mention Porphyry § and others, would it not carry us too far; they were all what we should now call superstitious: and yet it is always tacitly taken for granted, when the superstition of the ancient Christians is blamed, or ridiculed, that these men, of whom I have been speaking, were free from superstition.

Not that I would be understood to undervalue the classical authors in those things for which we admire them; or particularly to *blame* them, or even the adversaries of Christianity, for their weakness. Aristotle understood many things relating to man, as well as we do now; I would not neglect those things, because he could not account for the *Phænomena* of the *Rainbow* ||; if he talked about the *Rainbow*, *like other knowing men of his time*, he talked well enough. And, whoever talks about Ghosts and witches † and prodigies, like those of his own time, who are best informed, is not to be thought

\* Vol. 3. p. 26.

† I think *Socrates* should *not* be passed over; the best account of his being superstitious, according to the superstition of his age, is, I should think, in Nares's Essay on his Demon.—London, 1782. See particularly note (H), where the credulity of several great men is mentioned.—And in note (K) Xenophon is added to the number. P. 8. Mr. Nares lays it down as a proposition to be proved by him, "That a single instance of error, or of superstition, is by no means incompatible with the character even of the greatest and best of men." He has no view to any *Christians*, in proving this.

‡ De Rep. lib. 10. p. 761. Ed. Franc. 1602.

§ Lardner. *Old Stories*, in the Life of Pythagoras: perhaps only adopted, and handed forward by Porphyry.

|| Might not this be extended to *Moses*?

† Bp. Jewel was superstitious about Witches. Middleton's Inquiry, p. 221. Note.

thought deficient\* in understanding. There is nothing impossible in the nature of things, that we know of, in accounts of Spirits, &c. their incredibility arises from a long train of experience: nay, even now, many people of very good understandings, that is, capable of any reasoning, are superstitious; and many of weak understandings are free from superstition; on what this depends, may not yet be perfectly decided.—We conclude then, that the Fathers are not to be thought wholly unworthy of attention, on account of their *credulity*.

Nevertheless, it must be owned, that some of their Stories want *all sorts* of Apologies, though possibly there are none of them, which may not be excused one way or other, so as to prevent harm to Christianity, and take off any argument against it.—I feel myself most affected, when the Fathers speak of strange events, as having come within their own knowledge:—here, I suppose the case to have been, that they were earnest to receive accounts, and ready to admit evidence seeming to support their Holy cause; and we know, that evidence will be offered and persisted in, whenever it is likely to be well received. By accepting such evidence, the ancient Fathers have certainly left their successors a difficult task; I mean, that of clearing the *Reality* from all that rubbish, under which it is buried. But the incidental good of this evil may be great: it may induce us to study what we might have neglected: in the present state of things, as there must be † Heresies, so there must be doubt, and labour. The ancients seem more easy to be defended than those ‡ moderns, who have adopted many of their superstitions.—

Though

\* Bp. Fisher and others believed the Holy Maid of Kent to be a Prophetess:—See Middleton's Inquiry, p. 118.—Qu. Did they not *sometimes* suspect?—*a little?*

† 1 Cor. xi. 19.

‡ Cave, Tillemont.



Though we were to grant, that Dr. Jortin's idea of *Paulinus*\* might be taken as a sort of abstract idea of a Father, yet we must affirm, with Bishop *Hallifax*†, that such a person deserves credit with regard to *Facts*. A *Farmer*, who believed in Ghosts (in the 16th Century if you please) might give a *suspected* account of *them*, and yet a credible account of *common facts*.

I should hope, that what has been said would prevent infidelity from being the consequence of reading Dr. *Middleton's Inquiry* into the miraculous powers:—it might also tend to obviate the bad effects of a modern work, called an *Essay on Old Maids*; especially if these remarks on Credulity were joined with what is said on Celibacy, under the 32d Article of the Church of England, on the *Marriage of Priests*‡.

Before we close this subject of the ancient Christian Fathers, we should mention the work of Monf. *Daillé*, a Minister of the French reformed Church, pretty early in the last Century. His view is, to shew, that the Romanists pride themselves too much on the supposed agreement of the Fathers with their Opinions. With this view, Monf. *Daillé* shews with what restrictions the Authority of the Fathers ought to be allowed: he first marks out several difficulties in ascertaining any sense, which can properly be called *the sense of the Fathers*; and then shews, that, if such sense or opinion could be ascertained, there would be good reason to think it *fallible*. In doing this, he shews great learning, and

\* Remarks, 3. p. 145. † On Proph. p. 198.

‡ Perhaps the Instances of prodigies about *Julian* might be as much to the purpose as any, in this place; see Lard. Works, Vol. 8. p. 366. where we see how freely Lardner declares the Fathers unworthy of *credit*.—Their *zeal*, or *detestation* of *Julian*, *worked up* by degrees, made them so in the present instance; we must try every evidence; as well as every spirit.

and a good understanding; but he speaks too much as an advocate, and is not averſe to making an argument on his own ſide ſtrong, and on his adverſary's weak:—towards the concluſion, he ſays handſome things in favour of the Fathers, but they are compreſſed into too ſmall a compaſs to have an effect; had he quoted as many inſtances to ſupport his commendations as his reſtrictions, (which I think he might have done) he would have made his work more pleaſing, and more generally uſeful; and he would have done more *juſtice* to his Subject.

17. We muſt now recollect, that our immediate concern is proving the *genuinenefs* of the Books of the New Teſtament by *external* testimony;—and that we propoſed to bring as witneſſes, firſt our *Friends*, and ſecondly our *Enemies*. Having put the Student into a way of examining and receiving the testimony of Friends to Chriſtianity, we muſt now give ſome account of its *adverſaries*.

The three principal are *Celfus*, *Porphry*, and *Julian*: and theſe three are mentioned ſometimes without any others\*;—*Celfus* is placed by Lardner ſo early as the year 176; but no country is mentioned where he lived. Indeed nothing more ſeems to be ſaid of him, than that he was an *Epicurean Philoſopher*.—He was probably the Celfus, to whom *Lucian* addreſſed his *Pſeudomantis*: he wrote an elaborate work, the only work we know of his, profeſſedly againſt the Chriſtians, called *Λογος αληθης*, *the true Word*: this *Origen* answered in a work divided into eight Books.—We have not the objections themſelves, as publiſhed by Celfus, but only quotations in the answers.

Indeed,

\* Lard. Works, Vol. 8. p. 1, &c. from Jerom de Vir. illuſtr. proem.



Indeed, this remark may be made general; the works of the enemies of Christianity are missing: lost in some way or other; it seems as if *zeal* had destroyed some of them, because we know there were Edicts of Constantine and Theodosius Junior ordering them to be burnt: but it has been also said\*, that they were *despised* and disregarded; which seems not unlikely from what remains of them:—That they are not extant is a thing to be lamented, as they would do us probably much more good than harm; and as the want of them is apt to raise imaginations, that they contained more than they really did. It seems clear, that what we find quoted as Celsus's may be depended upon as his; because Origen did not know, that the works of Celsus would be lost; and he, of course, answered those arguments, which appeared to him most dangerous to his Religion.

But the *testimony* that *Celsus* has incidentally given is very valuable; it appears from him, that the Jews *expected a Messiah*, that almost all those things had been said to happen to Jesus, which our New Testament affirms; there are quotations out of *three Gospels*, though the Evangelists are not *named*, and many other parts of the New Testament, and not out of any of the *false Gospels*. He confirms (all in the way of objection) the Christian accounts of the *propagation* of the Gospel; and seems to have known of the principal *Heresies*. He may be said to confirm the accounts of the *Miracles* of the New Testament, partly by accusing the Christians of *Magic*.—This may suffice for *our* purpose: particulars may be found in *Lardner's* ancient Testimonies, or in *Origen* against Celsus, where there are *summaries* of Celsus's objections.

*Porphry*

\* Chrys. de S. Bab. Or. 2. Tom. 2. p. 539. Edit. Bened. Powell, p. 68. also Lardner's Works, Vol. 8. p. 2, 3.

*Porphyry*\* is placed in the year 270; he was a Tyrian, of a good Family: he is called, by Jerom, *Bataneotes*; whence some have thought, that he was born at Batanea, and that Batanea might be in some colony of Tyrians: he studied some time under Longinus; and afterwards he attended the School, which Plotinus kept at Rome, for six years. He wrote many books, had a philosophical turn, and admired Pythagoras; he wrote a copious treatise against the Christians, to whom he was a great enemy; and his attacks are reckoned the most formidable of any, among the ancients. But, incidentally, his *Testimony* is the most valuable on that very account; he had made himself acquainted with both the Old and New Testament; and there are plain references, in his writings, to our *four Gospels*, the *Acts*, and the Epistle to the *Galatians*, besides probable references to other Epistles of St. Paul. He may well be thought† to confirm our Saviour's *Miracles*. Some of Porphyry's works remain, but that against Christians only in fragments, and they are very much dispersed; in Eusebius, Jerom, &c. — Jerom's Commentary on Daniel, contains Porphyry's objections against that work.

*Julian* was Nephew of Constantine the Great, being Son of that Emperor's Brother, Constantius; a man of polished education and fine parts, and many good qualities. He became Emperor in 361, and died in 363, of a wound received in battle, in the 32d year of his age. He was brought up a Christian, but returned to Gentilism, and is thence called the *Apostate*. He seems to have been proud, vain, and, in some things, what is familiarly

\* Porphyry's Chapter in Lardner's *Tests*. is the 37th; *Works*, Vol. 8. p. 176.

† Lardner's *Works*, Vol. 9. p. 93. a remarkable passage.



liarly called, wrong-headed, for want of a particular cause, to which seeming absurdities can be ascribed. His apostacy seems partly owing to these faults, and partly to his great intercourse with the Pagan Philosophers. It is thought to have taken place when he was not much above twenty years of age. He was a great composer both of Orations and Epistles, not to mention *Edicts*. We have a folio Volume of his Works, now: his work against Christians was written while he was preparing for the Persian War. Fragments of it are to be found in the works of Cyril of Alexandria, who wrote against it: from which it appears, that Julian may be now considered as *a valuable witness* in favour of the Scriptures\*. He allows the time of the *Birth* of Jesus, and of the rise of the Christian Religion. "He bears witness to the genuineness and authenticity" of our *four Gospels*, the *Acts* of the Apostles, and so as to exclude other Histories. He plainly refers to several of *St. Paul's* Epistles. He allows Jesus Christ to have worked *miracles*; he mentions the conversion of *Cornelius*, and *Sergius Paulus*. "His arguments" "are perfectly harmless, and insufficient to unsettle the weakest Christian†."

Besides these principal enemies to Christianity, there were others; *Hierocles* † wrote a comparison between the Miracles of Jesus Christ and those of

\* Lardner's Works, Vol. 8. p. 410. See Richardson's Canon, p. 128. 130. and Powell, p. 68.

† How strange it is, that such men as Pliny Jun. and Julian should prefer Heathenism to Christianity! Could it be because the rites of the Religion, in which one is brought up, are strongly associated with all that is *really* valuable in Religion? religious principles, affections, sentiments?—giving up one's *outward* religion might seem treachery to Religion itself.

‡ Placed by Lard. in 303: an adviser in Diocletian's persecution. President in Bithynia, Prefect at Alexandria.

of *Apollonius*\* of Tyana; adopting *Philostratus*'s account of Apollonius, which has been thought by some to have been written with the same view; though Lardner seems to prove, that it did not at all refer to Christ.—Lactantius mentions an anonymous writer of the same cast, besides Hierocles; indeed he does not name Hierocles, though he *describes* him fully; but others do. Some ancient works against Christians are probably lost, as well as some ancient defences of Christianity.

On the whole, the testimonies of the professed enemies of Christianity may be reckoned *more valuable*, than that of the same number of *friends*. Their works had but little success in their own times, and now they afford very strong proof against the end for which they were written.

They are also extremely useful in confirming our reasonings by which we distinguish between *apocryphal* books and those which we call *canonical*.

This is well expressed, at the *end* of Lardner's Review of his ancient Testimonies†.

Having then given the general plan of our argument for proving the genuineness of the Books of the New Testament, and also sufficient specimens of the particular testimonies, on which that argument is founded, with directions to find the rest, we may conclude, that the Books of the New Testament *are genuine*.

\* Apollonius was, in some sense, an obscure man, or his character not famous, till raised by Philostratus about the year 210. Apollonius was a Pythagorean, and affected to improve upon Pythagoras, or go beyond him. And so, by fasting, &c. he was enabled (says his biographer) to do many wonderful things.

† Lardner's Works, Vol. 9. p. 97.



## C H A P. XIII.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAL AND  
FICTITIOUS NARRATIVES.

I. A GENERAL idea of the contents of this Chapter, seems the first thing here to be explained.

Though our proof, given in the preceding Chapter, of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament seems sufficient, yet it was all (or very nearly all) of the external sort; whereas genuineness is perhaps more frequently, though not more satisfactorily, proved from *internal* marks, than from external Testimonies. It is thus Mr. Hume proves the genuineness of the Εἰκὼν βασιλική, at the end of his reign of Charles I. (though, by the way, the third Volume of the Clarendon Papers seems clearly to prove, that it was written by Bishop Gauden):—now, internal proof presupposes a knowledge of style, manner, &c.—and we have no knowledge of the style and manner of the sacred writers, except we take for granted, that our Scriptures are written by them. We can say, indeed, that some things, written in early times of Christianity, are too absurd to be of Divine Authority; but we cannot say, they are too absurd to be written by *Matthew* the Publican.—How then can we get at any thing like internal Proof of the genuineness of the Gospels?—the most likely method seems to be, to prove, that such narratives could not be *invented* by *any one*: from whence it would follow, that they are mere simple relations of *real* facts ;

*facts*; that they are authentic Histories;—if they are such, the main point is gained, and a dispute about the authors would be thought superfluous.—Yet, if we wished to form an opinion on the point, we should say, and content ourselves with saying, who so likely to have recorded a set of facts and sayings (if they are truly recorded) as those who were witnesses of them and most interested to have them known and remembered? finding the names of certain persons prefixed as the Authors, would be thought quite a sufficient proof, that they were so, whenever there was no reason to the contrary.

Let us then see, whether it is at all credible, that any persons whatever could *invent* such narratives, as the Gospels are? could put together such a train of events and discourses, so as to have them believed: for that the Gospels were believed by many, is too evident to be questioned.

When we have shewn the great probability, that no persons whatever could have invented the series of Gospel events, we may offer some additional considerations, shewing, that such persons in particular as the *Evangelists*, could not connect such things into a regular narrative.—Nor would it at all follow, that the Evangelists could not write the Narratives; the facts are such, as they may well be conceived to *record*, supposing they had really *known* them; though such as they could not have *imagined*, had they never known them.

*First then*, we are to offer reasons for thinking, that *no persons whatsoever* could invent such narratives as our Gospels: and here the most satisfactory method would probably be, first, to speak *in general* of inventing narratives, and then to apply our observations to the case of the *Gospels*.

2. We can form more judgment, whether a relater invents what he relates, than might perhaps  
at



at first be imagined. The readiest way to judge, is to put ourselves *in the place* of the relater, surround ourselves with all his circumstances, and ask, could he *have known* this? could he *have thought* of that? *from whence*, in such a situation, could he have borrowed this fact, derived this notion, adopted this expression?—we may do this with various degrees of attention, but if we do it with the greatest conceivable degree, it will not fail us, or leave us in much doubt.

Without doing this very exactly, comparing *circumstances* will do a great deal towards discerning truth from fiction: it is surprizing what discoveries of falshood have been made, by working circumstances about into different combinations; this appears in cross examinations, so evidently, that, if a man wants to conceal any event, he never dares mention a number of circumstances, however trifling they may seem to be.

3. We may speak more precisely and readily of fictitious characters, if we are aware of the parts of which any one must consist. According to *Aristotle*, whoever makes a fictitious character, must be able to draw, with probability, a *μυθος*, or series of interesting incidents; *ηθη*, manners suitable to the character; *διανοια*, thoughts or sentiments, and *λεξις* expressions, such as a person of that character would most freely use\*.

Now, to take the most simple case first, let us suppose a man wanted to draw a character of one such as himself, an *equal*, a countryman, a cotemporary; I mean so that the fictitious character shall pass for *real*, and all the fictitious events for real; that must always be understood, on the present subject :

\* Want of *costume* in painting, and want of observing the *time* of certain inventions, such as fire-arms, &c. often discover something or other with regard to the Painter.

subject:—though he would here come the nearest to truth, or make his fictitious incidents most like to real ones; yet he would meet with some difficulties, which he would find unsurmountable; and, if he published his invention soon, he would have judges very near at hand.—Experience tells us, that no man is equal to the task of putting together a long series of facts, which shall be consistent with each other, and with cotemporaneous facts, whose truth is established, so as to deceive those who know mankind.—And we can conceive, that the fictitious person must be placed in some particular circumstances, and made to be connected with some particular persons; and that he must be represented as knowing some things and some men, better than the Author knows them; as being present at some places, which the Author knew but imperfectly; as being affected by some laws, or by some parts of Nature, or some civil commotions, or revolutions, which the author did not know minutely: in all which cases, though it would have been easy to describe real facts, fiction will be infallibly detected.

4. In the next place, suppose a man undertakes to draw a fictitious character of one *remote in place or time*, of a *foreigner* or an *ancient*, which he wishes to pass for real; his accounts may not seem so inaccurate and improbable to his countrymen and cotemporaries, but they will be in reality much more so; and therefore, after a little more time, they will be discovered and publicly known to be so:—he will not dare to be circumstantial, which will give, not only an insipidity, and an indecisive air to his narrative, but will make it less credible, and less attended to. No one will doubt about this, who has attended to the manner in which critics have proved the spuriousness of such writings

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as the Apostolic \* Constitutions, &c.—or who has seen the gross blunders, which some Foreign authors make in describing English manners.—(Not that I would insinuate, that English Authors describe French manners better; of this we are not judges).— . . The mistakes that men are liable to make, in describing the manners of *past times*, are mentioned by Lardner, at the Conclusion of the first part of the Credibility of the Gospel History †.— If a *Frenchman* was to write a feigned narrative of incidents happening in England, the falshood of his narration would appear in every page ‡.

5. The difficulty and the danger of detection is still greater, when any one undertakes to draw a character of a *Superior*: and the greater the superiority, the greater the difficulty: the awkwardness, with which lower people ape the manners of the higher, is enough to convince us of this:—the model is all dignity, ease, and elegance; the imitation is stiff, forced, mean, and contemptible.— But a superior is not only one higher in rank, but one higher in knowledge, abilities and talents, refinement of manners, elevation and dignity and purity of sentiment:—and also in power. If a low, vulgar person attempts to describe such an one, he immediately makes himself ridiculous to those who know high life; his manners are not fashionable, his generosity is extravagance; his dignity, blustering and arrogance; all his imitation a coarse dawbing, which leaves no expression of real greatness.— Let an ordinary mechanic write a Letter from a great statesman to his secretary, containing supposed confidential communications, not three words together will be right.—

6. The

\* See Lardner's Acc. of Porphyry, last Sect. about Philosophy of Oracles.

† Lardner's Works, Vol. 1. p. 420.

‡ How does *Gil Blas* appear to a *Spaniard*?

6. The absurdities, into which a fictitious narrative would run, would be greater still, if the character feigned was something *more than human*: here the Author's taste for *Prodigies* would display itself: His deity would easily take offence; and then all would be fire, thunder, vengeance; or else he would be flattered, and then there would be fantastic and arbitrary rewarding; of mere favourites, or accidental benefactors, or partizans. The Hero or Demi-God would "annihilate \* both space and time," and be sure to do nothing that a mere man could do, nothing that would be dictated by plain common sense †.

7. To these observations it may be objected, that, if it is so difficult to draw characters, why is it so often undertaken, and so successfully, in *Epic* and *Dramatic* compositions? . . . We might answer, that characters do frequently contain many such blunders, as we have just now mentioned; and these blunders do hurt and weaken the interest of the pieces, in which they are found; yet in some degree such pieces do interest those, who want nothing more than a temporary *illusion*: did any thing important *depend* upon the justness of drawing, the want of resemblance would soon be discovered. But the best drawn characters in the Epos and Drama are quite a different business from narratives intended to pass for *fact*: in the former, the illusion will be effected, though some incidents are known to be feigned; in the latter, there must be no fact that can possibly be disproved. No man could compose a more probable Epos than Henry Fielding; at the same time, he saw so much  
of

\* Lee.

† Here the Letter of *Jesus to Abgarus* might be read, and remarks made: it was mentioned Chap. XII. Sect. 5.



of detecting falshood by comparing circumstances, in his Magisterial capacity, that he would have been the last man in the world to attempt a circumstantial narrative, which should be received as *fact*.—No man would judge such an attempt more impracticable.—Merely to say, that such an one acted and spoke wittily, and such an one wisely, is not difficult; to make characters act and speak in many and extraordinary situations, so that what they do and say shall be believed as reality, is beyond the power of Man.

8. So far *in general* of making fictitious characters pass for real; let us now apply this to the Narratives of the New Testament, so as to see, whether it is credible, that *any person whatever* should have feigned or invented them.

The Gospel Narratives are very *circumstantial*: this single consideration goes a great way: give any judge a sufficient Number of circumstances, and he will discover any falshood.—Yet it must be owned, that each of the two opposite Histories of *Squires*, the Gipsy, was so circumstantial, that it would have been believed, had it not been for the other:—but then, though the number of circumstances was large for the kind of thing, in comparison it was very small, the scene confined, the persons very low, so as to have no property or education, not likely to be distinct, precise, simple, sincere; the incidents feeble, the cotemporaneous facts very obscure.—Of the *Εικων βασιλικη* we may say, that the opposite evidences were, when Mr. Hume wrote, very strong; so as to make the case doubtful; which may frequently happen; but it was a composition infinitely easier to invent than the Gospels: Then, there was external and internal Testimony on both sides; I do not know, that there is either *against* the Gospels: only a general prejudice and presumption. We may add therefore,

fore, that the circumstances mentioned in the Gospel Narratives were not only numerous, but public, striking ; circumstances affecting many civil Governors ; affecting Life and Death ;—giving accounts of the Jewish and Roman Laws, which are more known at this day than any others, by the dispersion of the Jews, and by the study of the Roman Civil Law. They were circumstances, relating to countries very distant from each other ; connecting very distant times, by means of prophecies and their completion. Such circumstances as these no man could feign without the disadvantages now mentioned, of describing foreign affairs, and past events.—To suppose the Narratives written before the Destruction of Jerusalem, (A. D. 70.), is in effect to suppose them true ; because they were believed, and could not possibly be believed, if false :—nevertheless, we may add, on this supposition, whoever invented the Narratives in question, at or near the time of the events, must have had all the difficulties of drawing the Character of a *Superior* ; a most amiable and sublime character ; nay, a character of one, who had power *more than human*.

9. Our conclusion here is, that it is highly improbable, and quite incredible, that *any person whatever* could have invented the narratives of the New Testament. From whence it follows, according to what was before laid down, that, if we do not prove the *Genuineness* of the Books of the New Testament, by internal evidence, we at least by internal evidence take away the ground of the Dispute : because we prove their Authenticity as *Histories* ; and, if the things there related were really performed, the names of the Historians become matters of inferior moment. We are now to proceed to shew, that such persons in particular as the *Evangelists* could not connect such things,



as are contained in them, by any power of invention.

The first step towards shewing this seems to be, to give some account of the Characters of the *Evangelists*; or sacred Historians (we may say) of the New Testament, since St. Luke composed the *Acts* of the Apostles; shewing, that they had a decent plain Education; but were not such proficient in learning, as to invent the Gospel History.

St. *Matthew* was a \* man of confined observation: of *Galilee*, as were the other Apostles; his usual Station was by the Sea-side, in Capernaum; his employment (probably) to collect Tolls and Duties of those, who came into Judea, and brought goods and merchandises by the way of the Sea of Galilee: — . . . that employment he quitted, when our Saviour called him from the receipt of Custom, but his education had then been long finished, his peculiar habits acquired, his character fixed. We find, he was able to make some kind of entertainment for a numerous Company. Amongst his Guests, were Jesus and some of his disciples, and many publicans; whose employments were at least nearly allied to Matthew's. The entertainment might be made, on taking leave of them and the Profession.—Matthew, to execute the Duties of his Office, must have understood numbers and accounts; and must have had some idea of the Commodities, for which toll or duty was paid;—but this knowledge would not have enabled him to compose a consistent, circumstantial Narrative out of his own imagination; in which such things should be described, as he describes in his Gospel: it is as probable, that the Printer's Boy should have invented Sir. I. Newton's *Principia*, as that Mat-

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\* For the facts here related, see Lardner's Appendix to his *Credibility*.

threw should have invented some actions and sayings of Jesus Christ, which he relates.

*Mark* was the same as *John*, \* *surnamed Mark*: his mother, *Mary*, lived at *Jerusalem*; *St. Peter* was a friend of the Family; and, when he was delivered out of Prison by the † Angel, he chose to go to their House immediately. *Mark* was *Sister's Son* to *Barnabas* ‡, who introduced his Nephew to *St. Paul*; *Mark* accompanied them, first to *Antioch* || (from *Jerusalem*), then to *Cyprus*. But, when they landed (from *Cyprus*) at *Perga* in *Pamphylia*, *Mark* returned home to § *Jerusalem*.—Though *Barnabas* was his uncle, *Peter* was his chief Friend: at home therefore he probably *conversed with Peter*.

Afterwards, when *Paul* and *Barnabas* set about a visitation of the Churches, *Barnabas* would have chosen his Nephew as an assistant; but *Paul*, rather hurt with *Mark's* having left him before, preferred *Silas*; though afterwards at *Rome* he again accepted *Mark's* assistance: and desired *Timothy* to bring him, as likely to be a good assistant; “profitable” “for the Ministry †.”—However, *Mark* adhered chiefly to *Peter*, the old Friend of his Family; and wrote his Gospel at *Rome*, with *Peter*, and from *Peter's* ¶ preaching: though he went once more with his uncle, *Barnabas*, to *Cyprus*, and was some time with *St. Paul* in his Troubles.

It appears, from this account, that *Mark* was not superior in worldly rank to *Peter*; and *Peter* was a Fisherman: possessed indeed of some fishing vessels, but not educated for any other employment.

*St. Luke* was probably a Jew, or of the Jewish religion;

\* Acts xii. 12, 25.

† Acts xii. 12.

‡ Col. iv. 10.

|| Acts xiii. 5.

§ Acts xiii. 13.

† 2 Tim. iv. 11.

¶ Preaching, at first, must have been *historical*. Lard. Suppl.



religion ; he was probably a \* *Physician*, but then it should be remembered, that Slaves used to be Physicians to their Master's Families. Some have concluded, from his being a Physician, that he must have been a Slave, but that cannot be concluded ; what *we* want, may ; that St. Luke's being a Physician does not imply, that he was as liberally educated as a modern Physician usually is. The notion of his being a Painter seems to be given up. His whole History consists in his accompanying St. Paul :—From Paul's preaching he wrote his Gospel ; probably he formed it into a regular Book in Greece, when he left Paul.—Indeed it is probable, that Luke was related to Paul ; “ Lucius † ” one of his “ *kinsmen*,” probably meant Luke :—at least, Luke accompanied Paul, as a Διακονος, or assistant, when sent Prisoner from Cesarea to Rome, and there continued with him during “ his two years imprisonment.” Tertullian and Chrysostom call St. Paul, St. Luke's *Master* ; that is, teacher ; though Luke was probably an hearer of Christ himself, and walked with him to *Emmaus*.—Now, if Luke was Paul's assistant, and Paul was a Tent-maker ; there is no reason to think, that Luke had any very learned or polite education. . He must have understood Greek ; so must all the other Evangelists.

*John* was the son of a *Fisherman* on the Sea of Galilee ; younger brother to *James* ; (son of Zebedee † ). His Father possessed a Boat and Nets ; and he hired || *Servants* necessary for fishing. John's Mother, *Salome*, was one of those who brought sweet spices § to embalm our Saviour's Body, and John had an home, to which he took ‡ the Virgin Mary.—Some think, John was a Relation

\* Col. xiv. 14.

|| Mark i. 20.

† Rom. xvi. 21.

§ Mark xvi. 1.

‡ Matt. iv. 21.

‡ John xix. 27.

tion of Christ's, and was employed as an humble friend, or honorable servant, about his Person.

It is said Acts iv. 13, of Peter and John, that they were ignorant and unlearned men; but *αγραμματοι* and *ιδιωται* means only, "*illiterate* men, and in private stations of Life:" "neither Doctors (*Γραμματεῖς*) nor magistrates." However, there is reason to think, that they had what we should call a decent education. The instruction they had received related chiefly to the Dispensation of *Moses*; (in all probability); and was the more full, on account of the general expectation of the Messiah then prevailing.—This text, Acts iv. 13, contains the observation which we want to enforce.

What has been said of St. Matthew, may now be said in general of the other Historians of the New Testament; if there is any thing in the Gospel (as we hope to prove) implying a superior turn of mind, that could not be invented by any of them; nor by that Spirit, which was imbibed at the feet of Gamaliel, and excited Saul to make \* Havock among the Christian Brethren.—Had these persons invented, we may see what they would have written, by their being desirous to call down *Fire* from Heaven †; by their *ambition* to be greatest in the Kingdom ‡ of Christ. They would *not* have invented accounts of || Diffensions among themselves; of their all forsaking their Lord, of one of them denying him, and another betraying him §.—

10. That the Gospel-narratives are not invented will farther appear, if we apply to them a little more particularly what was laid down before in general about *Miracles*, only taking care not to inroach upon

\* Acts viii. 3.

† Luke ix. 54.

‡ Mark ix. 34.

|| Acts xv. 2, 39.—Gal. ii. 11.

§ Matt. xxvi. 49, 56, 74.



upon the subjects of the subsequent chapters.—It seems undeniable, that, if the Evangelists had invented the accounts of the Miracles they related, those miracles would have been as idle and foolish, as those related by the ancient Fathers; for the Fathers had many of them much better education than the Evangelists. Inventing miracles is treading on dangerous ground; I know no one who would not, in such an attempt, even with the greatest improvements the world has ever had, run into absurd pomp and ostentation, into something that would dazzle and amaze the vulgar; into something remote from human nature, and common sense: when, therefore, we find the Gospel miracles rational, sober, seasonable, calculated to promote one particular end, and that one of an heavenly and supernatural kind; never morose, revengeful, superstitious, flighty; it is a sufficient proof, that they were not invented by men. I should think it might afford a strong presumption in their favor merely to reflect, that they appear rational even since the abolition of *witchcraft*: all nations in all ages, till very lately, have believed in witchcraft; and yet there is not properly any such thing in the New Testament; (for *Demoniacs* seem \* widely different from

\* See Macknight's Prelim. Essay, Vol. I. p. 172. Witches are human beings, that are worshippers of the Evil Spirit (or Spirits); they pay obedience to him, and he gives them some supernatural powers; they worship him at the Time or Place called in French *Sabat* (see Dict. Acad.) this is the idea; when people have suffered harm (from diseases, calamities, &c.) it has been ascribed to some particular Sorcerer, or Sorcerers, who has been punished as the *cause* of the harm. Sometimes a Sorcerer or Sorcerers has been, I think, punished merely for possessing the power of doing harm, it being taken for granted, that such power would be exerted. It is supposed to be known by certain marks, whether a person has such power or not; by certain actions, thought to be out of the common way of actions merely human.—*Laws* against witchcraft, have been Laws against any one exerting

from persons bewitched); whereas, if men had invented that Book, it would have contained instances of witchcraft innumerable.—

In order to make the *difference* between the *Gospel miracles* and those of the *Fathers* evident, it only seems necessary to *specify* a few of the latter class; as the former are well known:—these we may find in great abundance in Dr. *Middleton's* Free Inquiry: a book written with too little respect for the ancients, as has been already hinted. I hope, what has been said \* before, may render a reference to it safe: that is, may put readers upon thinking, before they form † their final judgment. The miracles of the Fathers seem often *imitations* of Gospel miracles, with an *heightening*. The death of *Polycarp* ‡ may be compared with that of Christ. The account of Ignatius's || appearing to the faithful in their dreams, may be compared to the necessary information given to St. Peter §. The *Demoniacs* of Scripture have given † occasion to a great many idle miracles, and to attempts which have been acknowledged unsuccessful \*: the Bactrian † Camel may be one instance of the foolish sort.—I do not know, whether St. *Anthony's* § visit from *Satan* will bear any comparison with our *Saviour's temptation*; which last

exerting or possessing such power. Abolishing such Laws is forbidding any one to be punished as the *cause* of such harm; or as possessing the *power* of inflicting it.

But a *Demoniac* is an human being possessed by a Demon or evil Spirit (whatever that may mean), tormented by him; not worshipping the Devil, nor having any power of performing any thing supernatural: passive; *causing* no evil to any one; or no intended, contrived evil.

\* Book I. XII. 16.

† According to our reasoning here, Dr. Middleton's abuse of the Fathers is turned into an argument in *favor* of the *Gospel History*: still he may depreciate the Fathers too much.

‡ Middleton, p. 124.

|| Midd. p. 108.

§ Acts x.

† Midd. p. 80.

\* Midd. p. 93.

† Midd. p. 89.

§ Midd. p. 147.



last is intended seemingly to give us at once precept and example in the three most dangerous situations of human life, namely, when men would undermine our principles with false *Philosophy*; would draw us into scenes not immediately criminal, but such as could scarce fail to corrupt us;—or would try to overpower us in direct assaults by the rewards of vice deemed irresistible.—As to miracles performed by *bones* or relics, or by the consecrated elements; I do not recollect any thing like them in Scripture; nor can those, who proclaimed their Faith when *Hunmeric* had cut out their tongues, be fairly compared with those, who had the gift of Tongues; a gift supernatural indeed, but necessary to enable them to preach the Gospel to all Nations.—The lower we descend in point of time, the more extravagant Miracles grow; the taste for them in this resembling the taste for strong liquors; that it requires a perpetual increase of strength.

We return to our conclusion; if the Gospel miracles are rational, and subsequent ones, though related, and we presume invented, by persons of better education than the Evangelists, are irrational; the Gospel miracles were *not invented* by the Evangelists.

II. Let us now take some notice of the *incidents, manners, sentiments, and expressions* found in the Gospels, such as have nothing supernatural in them; and see whether it is credible, that they were the invention of the sacred Historians. This is too extensive a subject to enter into fully, but we may give a few specimens, which may suffice for our purpose; and may engage the student to “search the Scriptures” for more.

Some *incidents* have been very lately hinted at, which the sacred Historians must have been desirous to

to omit if possible. We may add, that they would be more desirous to omit their own ambition, because it was disappointed;—disappointed ambition is a thing every one is ashamed of. Would any writers have chosen to describe their Hero as dying an ignominious Death? Suffering the punishment of a *Slave* between two *criminals*, must appear a very bad *Apotheosis*.

As to *manners* and *sentiments*; the writers of the New Testament evidently must want to have their Hero appear *great*; now, take a fisherman from the banks of *Newfoundland*, or even from the coast of Great Britain; and let him possess as many fishing-vessels, as Peter or Zebedee did on the Lake of Gennasareth, or sea of Galilee;—if he wished to describe an heavenly leader as *great*, would he give him gentleness and modesty in his manners? or humility and placability in his Sentiments? no; modesty would be meanness, and placability cowardice.

Nay, suppose he wished to describe such a character as Jesus, would he be *able*? the story of the *Good Samaritan* is so exquisite an instance of discretion, that I know not the man who *could* invent it:—And nearly the same might be said of the Story of the Woman taken in Adultery.—The Lord's Prayer is so nobly conceived, so aptly arranged, and so properly expressed, that I have not the least idea of any one's inventing it, whose thoughts were generally fixed on a laborious occupation.

It might illustrate some things, which have been said, if we were to suppose an European Gentleman of a very improved mind, to have fallen amongst Savages, and to have passed the latter part of his life, and died amongst them; he did them such services, as to be generally esteemed; and, after his death, they are desirous of recording his virtues;



virtues;—now, from the particular accounts given of him, it would be easy to judge, whether those accounts were real or fictitious. If the writer made him only a better sort of *Savage*, the account was *fictitious*; if he described manners and sentiments plainly, *without applause or censure*, such as he did not himself comprehend, or feel the merit of, and ascribed them to the deceased merely as *fact*, the account was *real*.

That this reasoning has weight, will not be denied perhaps: but the *degree*, in which it is forcible, will not be seen without attention to particular *instances*. It is with regret, that I forbear to say more of the instances already mentioned, and that I pass over many others; but our proper business will not allow all to be insisted on; therefore, I will confine myself to the *last scenes* of our Saviour's Life.

When *Judas*\* came to betray his Lord and Master, he was not upbraided; his salute was returned, at least with kind language; “Jesus said unto him, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?*”—Intimations had before† been given of treachery; but Jesus spake as a man, and would not repel with rudeness what had a courteous appearance: Besides, it is possible Jesus might perceive, that the act of Judas was about to bring on more fatal consequences than Judas himself intended; (for his remorse was afterwards desperate:) Jesus would also know, that kindness would be more apt to give him right feelings, than the sharpest upbraidings:—but not one of these motives is at all likely to have entered into the mind of Matthew, considered as a mere Inventor.

The address of Jesus to *Pilate*, according to the sense‡ in which some have understood it, has something

\* Matt. xxvi. 50. † John xiii. 21, &c.

‡ John xix. 11. Macknight.

something truly great in it; something which raises the character of Jesus very far above that of his Judge;—the sentence pronounced was unjust, by the Judge's own confession; nevertheless, our Saviour places it in the most favourable light, and apologizes for it;—he does indeed rather intimate, that Pilate ought not to have boasted of power, as he only submitted to the Jewish Priests, and at best was only a tool of such a Prince as Tiberius; but, though this is intimated with an ingenuous dignity, yet the ruling sentiments are pity and complacency, which mark a genuine superiority. How St. *Matthew* could of himself give the character of Jesus such sentiments, is inexplicable.

When Jesus was “led away” to be crucified, “there followed him a great company\* of people, and of women, which (women) also bewailed and lamented him.”—What shall he say to them? shall it be this? “Have pity upon me†, have pity upon me, O ye my Friends! for the hand of God hath touched me.”—Had we been composing the scene, we should have been well contented with this sentiment; and so would *Matthew*; attention to self, in such a situation, would convey no idea of meanness: but no! these were the words of *Job*: the words of *Christ* breathe a spirit of sublime benevolence, which makes their Pathos inimitable: “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children!”—For my own part, I know of nothing in either Tragedy or Oratory, which does not fall below this.

A vulgar inventor would not have described Christ, under great pain and fatigue, just expiring, as making a provision for his earthly parent‡. “Behold thy Son,”—“behold thy Mother;” are perhaps as proper and

\* Luke xxiii. 27. 28. † Job xix, 21. ‡ John xix. 26. 27.



and beautiful expressions for such an act of introduction, such a forming of a connexion, as can be imagined;—Jesus could not then point with his hand; he could only mark out each of these beloved personages to the other, by his eyes and countenance.

But, remote as these instances are from the conceptions of any ordinary man, I know not whether the last I shall mention is not, if possible, still more so: and that is, the prayer of Jesus to his heavenly Father, offered, probably, whilst the Jews were actually nailing him to the Cross;—"Father, forgive them, for they know not\* what they do:"—plain, simple, free from all rhetorical colouring, all declamatory exaggeration! yet containing ideas grand and affecting beyond measure! I say not, what mechanic, but what poet, what painter, what artist or inventor of any kind, has ever been equal to feigning any thing so truly divine?—Such *wisdom*, about the true interests of those, who themselves were in a state of blindness and ignorance?—Such *candour* and indulgence in urging that very ignorance in excuse?—Such *fortitude* as is implied in Jesus's considering all circumstances, whilst under actual pain and disgrace; "enduring the Cross, despising the shame†?"—Such *meekness* as, in extreme sufferings, utters no complaints, no reproofs? and lastly, such *benevolence* as is displayed in praying for forgiveness to those, against whom the sufferer would have been indignant, had they done a much less cruel deed to any but himself?

12. The last reason that I shall urge, why the Gospel narratives cannot have been invented, is the *agreement of the different Evangelists* with each other. Indeed, if it could be imagined that they had written in *concert*, or had *copied* from each other,

\* Luke xxiii. 34.

† Heb. xii. 2.

other, the force of this argument would be weakened : but appearances are very strong against such a supposition.—Undoubtedly, *John* wrote after the other three, and so much after them, that he might have seen their Histories; but then, as he does not write with a view of saying the same things, but rather with a view of *supplying* what he thought they seemed to have omitted, his having seen three Gospels is not to be pleaded in the present case:—*Each Evangelist* seems to have been first possessed of many *facts* and sayings, and to have judged, that the converts, and those to whom Christianity was preached, ought to know them as regularly as himself; and each seems to have written them down with this view: each would probably have thought it needless to write, if any Gospel had already subsisted in the place where he was.—Some have thought, that Mark abridged Matthew, but the contrary seems proved by Lardner\*; Mark does not follow the *order* of Matthew, and he wants some things mentioned by Matthew, which no abridger would have left out, and has some things which Matthew has *not*. In general it may be observed of the first three Evangelists, that each has written what may be called a complete Gospel; that is, the essentials of a Gospel; and that each has some things not unimportant peculiar to himself; though no one of them has † nearly *all* which might have been collected. This looks very unlike combination; and so does the plain artless manner, in which all the Gospels are written; and ‡ the varieties which are found amongst them in lesser matters.—In short, there is no appearance of any concerted plan between the different Evangelists; and, on the supposition that there was none, we say,

\* Supplement to Cred.

† John xx. 30, 31. xxi. 25.

‡ Powell Disc. 5. p. 79.



say, that their agreement is a very strong argument that they did not *invent*, but only *related*.—For the Histories which may be invented are infinite; therefore, if any one Relator invents, the probability, that he will not coincide with other Relators, is infinitely great:—what then would be the case, if three different Relators, though all aiming to make the same person Head of a new Religion, wrote from their Invention!—How widely different would their relations be from our first three Gospels!—how much more would each differ from the rest, than any one of our Gospels differs from the others!

As to the *order*, in which the three Evangelists *did* write, it does not seem settled; different writers have had different opinions, but to examine them would delay us too long. Nor can the order, in which three writers wrote, be of very great consequence, if they wrote independently of each other. Three different narrations, written in different places, might be written at the same time; one might be begun first, another finished first; and so on.

13. The last observation to be made on this subject, upon the difference between real and fictitious narratives, is, that the reasoning made use of in this Chapter will always appear the more forcible, as the human mind shall be more *improved*.

We say the Gospel narratives must be real, because no one could invent such incidents, manners, sentiments, expressions, as we find in them. The Evangelists at least were not improved enough to do it; in morality, or in philology.—If this be a real argument, it is one, which will appear the more clearly, the more we improve in those particulars. Now *morality*, consisting of Rules for making mankind happy, depends upon whatever affects *happiness and misery*; and indeed includes  
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our *religious* Duties, and the grounds on which we perform them.—As we improve, therefore, in the knowledge of *Man*, of *God*, of the Laws of *Nature*, we improve in *morality*. And moreover experience, if duly attended to, will improve our judgments about truth and falshood, made upon grounds of probability. Hence, almost every species of improvement will bring our argument forward, and render it more striking and more forcible.

If, as men improve, the Gospels continue to seem to contain good morality, the evidence of their excellence must be acknowledged to *increase*; because every improvement in the judges of this matter, must put the writings judged to a new trial.—And if, as men improved, the Gospel morality should appear more and *more* excellent, the argument in favour of its divine original would be irresistible.

*History* seems to justify our giving into this train of thought: *false Gospels* (weak and foolish as they were) would not have spread, if they had not pleased\*. The very absurd and silly stories of *Philostatus* are said to have occasioned trouble in the Church at one †time: we have not now the least idea of attending to such fables: yet we admire the canonical Gospels: we may therefore say, that these have been *rising* in estimation: for, however they might be admired at first, yet, whilst foolish writings were also admired, admiration implied but little real excellence. As the false gospels have sunk in credit, the true Gospels have risen; even though the admiration of them now should not be stronger than it was at first.

Bishop *Hurd* has shewn, by his Sermons, how a great critic (in the highest sense of the word) may  
open

\* Jer. Jones, Vol. 1. p. 5.

† Mosheim, Vol. 1. 8vo. p. 256.



open new beauties and excellencies of Scripture; and the more we improve our minds, the more we admire the passages exhibited in the eleventh Section of this Chapter. Other men will hereafter probably admire them more.

Thus, every new improvement of the human mind will discover new instances of the excellence of Christianity; and every new instance of its excellence will be a new proof of its *truth*.

Well may the learned *Daillé* say, as he does, “La sagesse exquise et l’ineffimable beauté de la Discipline même de Jesus Christ, est (je l’avoue) *le plus fort et le plus sur argument de sa \*verité.*”

\* On the Fathers near the end, p. 518.



## C H A P. XIV.

OF THE EVIDENCE, WHICH A BOOK MAY CONTAIN  
IN ITSELF, OF THE TRUTHS OF FACTS RELATED  
IN IT.

1. **I**N the introduction to this set of Chapters, beginning with the 12th and extending to the end of this Book, it was laid down, that the History, which the writers of the New Testament give, contains *in itself*, and implies, sufficient Testimony of the principal facts recorded: this we are now to consider more at large; and every thing proved will go to confirm the proposition contained in the *Heads* of Lectures, that the Gospel Narratives were not invented.—In order that our reasoning on this subject may have its free course, and its proper weight and effect, it will be expedient, before we speak of the New Testament, to take a *general* view of the *nature* of *internal historical* evidence; and to illustrate our general observations by examples, about which those, who want conviction with regard to Revelation, have no prejudices.—It is most usual to offer the general observation first, and the particular instances or illustrations afterwards; but I am, on most occasions, inclined to reverse this method; as I think general truth is most easily understood after particular instances, it being only an enlarging of those instances, and an extending them to other particulars, till the observation is seen to be capable of being applied to all. — —

I may, therefore, be permitted to mention instances first, when that seems most convenient.



2. On this footing I observe, that, if Livy, in his historical writings, gives an account of any event which might easily have been *contradicted*, and which, if false, probably would have been contradicted at or near the time when he published them, and that account never was contradicted, or refuted, by any cotemporary Historians, epistolary correspondence, &c., the mere *silence* strongly tends to make such account credible.—It seems unnecessary, at present, to mention events more particularly ; any, which we chose to fix upon, might answer our purpose here ;—though indeed it is making the observation but little more general to say, ‘ Historical assertions, likely to have been contradicted, if false, and yet not contradicted, are credible.’

3. If *Æschines*, in an Oration against Demosthenes, says any thing favourable of Demosthenes, that favourable assertion is the more credible, on account of the motives to avoid it : and the same if Demosthenes says any thing favourable of Philip, or Cicero of Verres.—Or, in general terms, ‘ Events allowed to be true by those, who must have wished them false, are credible.’

4. It may be considered as a part of this last general observation if we say, that ‘ events are credible, if allowed to be true by those, who deny their plain consequences.’ Because, when a person denies the plain consequences of a fact, he would *wish* to deny the *fact*, if he could with any appearance of candor ; the falshood of the fact would most completely rid him of the consequences, by which he is troubled.—Was *Aristides* just ? yes ; the plain consequence of his being so was his being esteemed and trusted, and his receiving the suffrages of the people : when, therefore, any persons refused to vote for him, at the same time allowing his character good, they shewed, that they allowed it unwillingly ; they would  
not

not have allowed it, if they could have avoided it; as they could not avoid it, their attempts are so many proofs or arguments that he was just.—

It comes to much the same thing to say, that an event is credible, when it is *accounted for absurdly*; for, whoever accounts for an event absurdly wishes to deny it:—Indeed, no one can well deny the plain consequences of an event, but he must account for it from some cause different from that, to which it is by others generally ascribed: he must impute it to some wrong *motive*.—Was Aristides just? what justice he had was *owing* to an *affectation* of making himself appear \* better than other men: the man who thus *accounted* for Aristides's Justice, did it in order to avoid its proper *consequences*; and would have denied the reality of it, if he had dared.—Did Charles 1<sup>st</sup> of England make a minute in Council, that he meant not to recognize the claim of a certain Prince to the Kingdom of Spain, though, on some formalities, he had repeated the title of *King*, meaning that Prince? (as we repeat the title of King of *France*, meaning the King of England)? the consequence is, that he was sincere and prudent; some deny this, and say, that the consequence is, he was insincere. Or they *account* for his making the minute by ascribing it to a bad motive; thus confirming the *fact*.—Those who have said, that such person's *affectation* was owing to incantations and *witchcraft*, would deny the affection if they could; not being able to do that, they *confirm* the evidence in favor of its existence.

5. When we read any of Cicero's *Letters* to his Brother Quintus, or to his Friend Brutus, and see a fact spoken of *as known* to the person, to whom the Letter is addressed, that fact is credible, not only

\* Se ignorare Aristidem, sed sibi non placere quòd tam cupidè elaborasset ut præter ceteros Justus appellaretur. Corn. Nep.



only as asserted by Marcus Cicero, but as *attested* by Quintus or Brutus : it is attested with the same force, as if the fact had received the testimony of Quintus Cicero, or Marcus Brutus, in a court of Justice. This is, in general terms, ‘ facts implied in Letters are attested by the persons, to whom the Letters are addressed.’ Nor does it make any difference, in the nature of the evidence, though it must in the strength of it, whether the Letter is addressed to an individual, or a *number* ; whether Cicero wrote to Marcus Brutus, or to the *Roman Senate*.

6. If Corn. *Nepos* publishes the life of his friend *Atticus*, whilst Atticus \* is *alive*, and speaks as if he (*Atticus*) had been *present* at any event, then Atticus is to be deemed a *witness* of that event, just as if he had attested it in a court of Judicature. This observation is allied to the first, only that the first merely states the fact to be credible, because of its not being contradicted, whereas this marks out the particular evidence, by which it is supported. Thus, I call Atticus a *witness*, though he gives no evidence expressly, that he himself resided and studied at Athens ; remitted a great part of his fortune thither ; was beloved both by M. T. Cicero and Hortensius, though they were rival Orators : nay, by M. Anthony, who hated Cicero, and all the rest of his Friends.

This Observation grows more important, as we suppose the *number* of persons present to increase. Suppose a Proconsul or Prætor mentions to a Senate *twenty* persons, who have been present at any event, and these twenty know of the assertion ; then such event is confirmed by the concurrent Testimony of twenty Witnesses. How strong that Testimony is, may appear hereafter.—In general, “ persons  
declared

\* *Hætenus Attico vivo edita hæc a nobis sunt.* Sect. 19.

declared (who *know* that they are declared) to have been present at any event, are *witnesses* of that event."

7. Nor is it always necessary, that the persons referred to should be specified by *name*: they may be spoken of collectively, as a *Body*: there may be other *marks* besides *names*. Suppose Cicero to accuse *Verres* of having done a cruel and oppressive thing to *an hundred* people in Sicily, whom he does not name, we have not only Cicero's declaration in proof of the fact, but some testimony from a number of *Witnesses*: Cicero obliges himself to produce an hundred witnesses; he calls all who know the affairs of Sicily to witness, that there was about such a number of persons injured: he puts it in the power of many persons to *disprove* what he affirms.

8. There were *wars* in consequence of Julius Cæsar's Death; these wars serve as proofs of the nature of his Death.—The orphan daughters of Aristides were supported and portioned by the public treasury; this shews, that Aristides had been disinterested, and esteemed; and therefore, that he had been *just*.

9. It may also be proper to observe, that the sorts of testimony here enumerated are capable of *uniting*, and strengthening each other: some events may be supported by them all *jointly*. The assassination of *Cæsar*, would have been *contradicted*, and has not been.—It has been expressly owned; and by men of all *parties* and persuasions: it is mentioned in *Letters* as known to those to whom they were addressed;—the *names* of the conspirators have been ascertained;—the presence of the *Senate* at large has been affirmed;—and *effects*, relating to the *Succession*, &c. have been recorded.

10. We will mention no more internal evidences, though these may not be all, which might



be enumerated.—It may however, as some of these are from persons who have *written* nothing, be proper to distinguish the evidence of which we speak, from *traditional* evidence; they seem somewhat alike. Traditional evidence is *variable*, handed down from Father to Son, admitting some change at every *step*, from inaccuracy, prejudice, &c.; but the evidence here described is *invariable*; flourishing with uniform vigor to successive generations.

Let us now apply the observations, which we have made, to the evidence which the *New Testament* contains in itself of the facts recorded in it: extending our proof occasionally to early *Christian writers*.

11. From the first observation, we see what evidence we have for many facts, which would have been *contradicted*, especially by those who wrote against Christianity, had they been misrepresented in the New Testament;—by *Jews* and *Heathens*; who envied and persecuted:—we may particularly mention Josephus and Celsus.—The *darkness* at the Crucifixion of our Saviour may be one instance of such facts:—the *slaughter* of the Infants at *Bethlehem* another.

The *silence of Josephus*, as to the affairs of Christians, is so remarkable, that it requires some *separate notice*; and, when joined with the inquiry, whether one passage, which does speak of Jesus, is genuine or interpolated, it makes a copious subject; what may seem needful to be said upon it in these Disquisitions, shall be said at the close of this Chapter.

When the *Jews* allow, that, in the reign of Tiberius, Jesus performed “*res \* prodigiosas*,” when *Heathens* allow, that Christians *multiplied* very fast,  
soon

\* Grotius de Ver. Lib 5. Sect. 2. says “*ipforum Thalmudicorum et Judæorum Confessio est.*”

soon after that Reign ; we must not say, that their evidence is of an ordinary sort. They would not have allowed any thing so favourable to Christianity, if they could possibly have avoided it. On the same ground, the Testimony of *Pliny* \* Jun., in favor of the *morals* of Christians in his Time, is very strong. “ They entered,” says he, “ into a solemn engagement not to steal, or rob, or commit adultery, or defraud.”

The Jews of old allowed, that Christ did *miracles*, but said, that he did them through *Beelzebub* ; they are therefore on the footing of those, who deny the plain *consequences* of events, or *account* for them absurdly : that is, they bear testimony in favor of the *facts*, which is peculiarly strong, because *involuntary*.—*Celsus* is of this number, and the *Talmudical* writers may be added ; these (as well as many more ancient Jews) “ in order to disparage our Lord’s Miracles, gave out, that they were performed by magical arts, such as he had learned in *Ægypt* †.”—

When the speaking of foreign *tongues*, on the famous day of *Pentecost*, was ascribed to drinking unfermented wine, a strong testimony was given of the Fact ; that foreign languages *were* spoken.

When St. Paul writes an *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, and orders them to correct the *abuses* of the *Gift of Tongues*, all members of the Church of Corinth are witnesses of the existence of such gift.—

In like manner, when *Justin Martyr* ‡ speaks to the *Roman Senate* of facts known to them, he makes  
them

\* Ep. Lib. 9. Ep. 97.

† Lard. Test. Vol. 1. p. 29. See also Macknight Prelim. Obs. 8. p. 66.

‡ Justin Martyr can only be produced here as a *similar* instance ; if our business is, strictly, to prove that the *New Testament* contains evidence in itself : yet such similar instance is worth mentioning.



them witnesses of those facts. That is, supposing the Senate to *attend* to what is \* said:—if the Senate did not give much attention to *miracles*, they were at least good witnesses of more *ordinary* facts, if of such a nature that they could not but attend to them.—Tertullian's Apology mentions many important facts as known to the *Roman Magistrates*.

The *twelve Apostles* are named, as having been *present* whilst our Lord performed several miracles; and they must have *known*, that they were said to have been present: they are therefore witnesses; how valuable their evidence is, may be considered hereafter; in Chap. xvi.

The Apostles are mentioned by *name*, but St. Paul appeals to *five hundred*, *without* giving their *names*. Had he been called upon, he must have produced them: those, to whom he wrote, were persuaded that he *could* produce them.—Some indeed were "*fallen asleep*," but they must have given their evidence to others, with whom they conversed.

We may remember too, that *five thousand* were miraculously fed with *Loaves and Fishes*.

The *effects* of the Gospel History were very strong, and therefore they strongly prove its truth. How strong they were, will appear best in Chap. xviii. but it is almost sufficient to say, that every *conversion* was a powerful *effect*, and therefore every *convert* a powerful witness. When we consider, how much each convert † gave up, how much he hazarded, and how much he underwent, we cannot but conclude, that he had carefully ‡ *weighed* all the evidence for and against his new Religion.

The sorts of evidence here mentioned will *unite*  
in

\* Middleton's Inquiry, 5thly.

† Acts iv. 34.

‡ Powell, p. 85. Lard. Jewish Test. p. 13. 28.

in proving the *Gift of Tongues*, as well as the death of *Julius Cæsar*.—It has not been contradicted ;—it was allowed unwillingly :—it is taken for granted in *Letters* ; many are affirmed to have been *present* at it, some of whom are named : and its *effects* have appeared in multitudes of *conversions* to Christianity.

12. Nothing now remains of what has been proposed, except the observations concerning *Josephus*.— It seems strange, that *Josephus* should have said nothing about Christians, except one thing about John the Baptist : and the question is, how are we to account for his *Silence* ? Some will say, he *has* said something about Christians, for he has magnified their Leader ; there is, no doubt, a passage in his works to that purpose ; but I believe it to be an *interpolation* : the reasons, on which this opinion is founded, would be too tedious for an undertaking such as ours : they may be seen in *Lardner's* ancient Testimonies, where reference is made to authors on both sides of the Question.— Others will say, the passage about *John Baptist* is an interpolation, but I think most Students will now think it is not. There is another passage about *James* the Just, Brother of our Lord, which I believe to be *spurious*. Leaving these matters to be determined in your *critical* researches, I will *presume*, that *Josephus* is *silent* about Christians properly so called, and will inquire into the cause of his silence.

It seems utterly incredible, that this silence should be otherwise than *intended* ; he lived from the year 37 to beyond the year 90 : Christians had that name (Christians) at Antioch in the year 40 : he lived much in the *world*, as a *General* and a *Courtier*, though he was originally a *Priest*. He lived at *Rome*, and was well acquainted with Roman affairs : he must have known the *Persecution* under Nero  
perfectly



perfectly well.—What was his *motive* for never mentioning those people, who were grown numerous and important in his time, who founded their Religion on his own, cannot be said with absolute certainty: but probably it was *a mixture of hatred and respect* for the Christians.—Not willing to speak well of them, not able to speak ill with any success, he judged, that he could not do them more harm than by passing them over in silence. And this agrees with his *character*. He was by no means a man to make a point of conscience of omitting no truth; he omitted the History of worshipping the *Golden Calf*; he never uses the word *Zion*: he was, in short, a true *worldly* man; he was hated by his own nation: he wanted to make *Vespasian* the *Messiah*!—Professor *Bullet* argues upon facts, and concludes, that Josephus paid an high regard to the Character \* of Christ.—I think, the number of instances, which the Professor gives, of persons of less note than Jesus mentioned by Josephus, many of them pretending to be the Messiah, prove undeniably, that Josephus must have omitted speaking of Jesus and his followers *designedly*.

Though no probable account could be given of Josephus's silence, his works are much more useful than hurtful to Christianity. It wants not his express testimony; he has incidentally confirmed the Gospel History in many particulars relating to Judea; and he has confirmed the authenticity of the *Prophecies* of the Gospel, concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem: of which destruction he was an eye-witness.

\* Salisbury's Translation of Bullet, p. 217—229, (the end).

## C H A P. XV.

OF THE CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES, IN  
GENERAL.

I. **H**AVING shewn that the Books of the New Testament are *genuine*, and contain narratives which could not be *invented*, and moreover *imply* very strong *evidence* of the Facts which they record; we proceed, according to the *plan* mentioned in the Introduction to the 12th Chapter, to take particular notice of the *supernatural* events related in them; supposing doubts to arise about these, they throw an obscurity over all the rest; but supposing these to be established, they very strongly confirm the rest.

I know not that any one has questioned the credibility of miracles, on any *general* principle, except Mr. *Hume*. He has an Essay on this subject which makes the tenth Section of his "Inquiry concerning the human understanding." Though I think him mistaken, in his argument and conclusion, I would not recommend my opinion by depreciating his character: he seems to have been a man of amiable manners and a benevolent disposition. He was possessed of great knowledge, and will live to posterity as an *Historian*. Finding popular language to express things inadequately, especially concerning the mind, instead of laying the blame on *language* and correcting that, he called all our notions into question, which, though inaccurate in some respects, and made so in part by popular expressions, are far less inaccurate than they seem  
to



to be. Mr. Hume has, however, by his researches, made some improvements himself, and occasioned more to be made by other men. But the work of undoing established notions and prejudices occupied him so much, that he settled and determined little or nothing. Indeed, he himself has no confidence in his own principles, as he has left them. That he should be sometimes inaccurate, in a number of nice and subtle discussions, is not much to be wondered at; that he should be particularly so in religious subjects, is much to be lamented: he seldom, or never, speaks acrimoniously on any other subjects. In other subjects, he seems to be aiming at *truth*; in religious ones, at *confutation*. In treating other matters, he is forming opinions; in treating religion, he is supporting notions and prejudices already formed. Not that I would ascribe his aversion for established religious tenets, to any worse cause than his historical knowledge of the abuses and corruptions of religion: which, I fear, make a much greater figure in History, and even in common Life, than Religion in its native purity and simplicity. I know not that he would be offended with what I say; or with any objections to his writings, made with candour and good manners:—except it were with the observation, that, in alledging facts, he has adduced some, and omitted others, as much with party views, as much taking for granted the truth of his own opinions, as any of the ancient Fathers whom he would accuse of pious fraud\*. I could much wish to know what he would say to this: perhaps only, that he acted like all other *Advocates*.

2. Mr.

\* See Leland on the Miracles said to be performed at the Tomb of the Abbé de Paris: and Mr. des Vaux, quoted by him. View of Deistical Writers, Letter 19. p. 321, 322.

2. Mr. Hume's *Essay* on Miracles is divided into *two parts*: in the first, he speaks as a *Logician*, and attempts to prove, that no miracle *can be* made credible; in the second, he speaks as an *historian*, or man of the world, and endeavours to shew, that no miracle *has been* made credible. At present, we are chiefly concerned with the *first part*. His *conclusion* is, "That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falshood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish: and, even in that case, there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force, which remains after deducting the inferior."

This conclusion must need some *explanation* to those, who are not acquainted with the premises: especially as talking of the falshood of a testimony as being *miraculous* (very inconsistently with Mr. Hume's definition of a \* miracle), makes a perplexity.—A miracle, if there were any such thing, must be "a transgression of a Law † of Nature;"—now the question is, can we believe an event to have happened, which is such a transgression, upon human testimony? First, on what do we believe the existence of any law of Nature? on Experience.—Next, on what do we believe human testimony? on Experience. When therefore we believe a miracle, we oppose two experiences; if that for the testimony was the stronger, then, in some sense, the falshood of the testimony might be called "*more miraculous*" than the transgression of the Law of Nature: and our belief is finally grounded on the *difference* between the two testimonies opposed ‡.

3. To

\* "A transgression of a Law of Nature, by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent."—8vo. p. 129; *Essays*.

† Hume. 8vo. p. 129. ‡ This is like p. 144. Hume. 8vo.



3. To some, perhaps, this argument may seem to come within Mr. Hume's description \* of those of *Dr. Berkley*; "they admit of no answer, and produce no conviction."—Yet it seems, that an *examination* of it may be productive of benefit, with a view both to our judgment of truth, and our principles of Religion.

My general idea of Mr. Hume's argument is, that it is an instance of that very species of fallacy, which he himself has, in his *Essays*, laboured so much to expose and prevent; it represents popular prejudice, as philosophical reasoning: the truth of this notion may appear from the following considerations; in which we will attempt, first, to analyze one of the experiences which he balances, and then the other; first, we will endeavour to shew what wrong conceptions he offers with regard to *Laws of Nature*: secondly, into what erroneous notions we should be led by following him implicitly with regard to *human Testimony*.

4. He speaks of "*the Laws of Nature*" as if they were something, which we knew to be *fixed*†; whereas we really know of no such thing; when we use the expression 'a Law of Nature,' we speak in a very loose and popular manner. A *Law* does not properly relate to things inanimate, but to *voluntary* agents. A Law is a rule, which voluntary agents cannot violate without incurring some evil. Laws are rules generally followed, and therefore when any thing *inanimate* takes repeatedly the same course, we conceive it as following a *rule*, or, as it cannot govern itself, obeying a *Law*; but its being subject to any Rule, or Law, is really the dictate of our *imagination*: we make a kind of *person* of it; and, in some indistinct way, fancy it a person under government, rule, order.

5. For

\* *Essays*, 8vo. Vol. 2. p. 173.

† See Part 1st; beginning of last paragraph but one. p. 128. 8vo.

5. For instance, we say, ‘Lead falls to the ground by the *Law of Gravity* ;’—so we say, speaking from our habitual feelings, or *prejudices*, but, in reality, we *know* nothing of any *Law of Gravity*. We know that Lead *has* fallen to the ground; we know not that it has ever risen from the ground; but what *will* happen the next time we try, we know not in the least.—Indeed we *act* as if it would fall, because we have had an habitual *expectation* of its falling, generated in our minds, (in a manner not thoroughly understood), and because we have acted on such expectation, and have *found* that it did not deceive us: and those who have acted otherwise, have been punished, or have incurred *evil*. But this cannot, with any propriety, be called *knowledge*. Whenever we set aside our habitual expectation that Lead will fall, which is a mere *prejudice*, we must find our *judgment* in a state of perfect *indifference* as to its falling, rising, or moving in any possible direction: and, *at first*, we should as soon believe it to move in any one direction, as in any other.

This is not meant to condemn our ordinary *principles of action*: ordinarily we must act according to principles, which have been found to carry us right; this is prudent;—but we should be aware how factitious the expectation is, from which we act, how gradually it has grown; in order that we may, at any time, recover our reason and judgment, when that expectation would lead us into error, or actual evil. We may *act* ordinarily as if Lead would fall, but when we examine into the elements of our minds, and compare different *principles*, we should keep in mind, that, to an *unprejudiced* understanding, the direction in which it moves is a matter of perfect *indifference*.



- 6. Having then freed the mind from its most usual *prejudices* relating to Laws of Nature, we may more safely and profitably go on to see, how it makes those deductions from *experience*, upon which it *acts*, by which it *guides* itself in all occurrences of Life. But it will be best to make use of that Term, which is commonly used by the best writers: I mean, *Analogy*. Mr. Hume does not use it in his Essay on Miracles, strictly speaking, but he uses it in his Notes on that Essay, and in the ninth Section of the same Inquiry concerning the human Understanding, of which the Essay on Miracles makes the tenth Section. A few *general* observations on Analogy may not be unacceptable, especially as Bishop *Butler* observes\*, that *Analogy* is a part of *Logic* not yet well studied. My main purpose shall be, to offer some *cautions* about admitting conclusions from analogy rashly; where they are remote from common life, and otherwise likely to be erroneous.

When we conclude, from any thing having happened, that the same will happen again, in like circumstances, we are said to reason by *Analogy*. This sense of the Term has some affinity to the *mathematical* one, there being here two events and two situations to be compared; nevertheless, conclusions by analogy are not, properly, reasoning: a *single event* may give some faint expectation of its being repeated, when the same circumstances recur; (at least when we have been accustomed to other analogies); a *repetition* makes the expectation stronger; and the more constant the repetition, the stronger is the expectation generated; till at length we lose all our doubts, and expect the event fully and intirely:—this, however, is only a *single analogy*.

But an event may be expected by *several* different analogies; indeed there is no end of the analogies,

\* Butler's Analogy, Introd. p. 5. Bp. Hallifax's Edition.

logies, which may lead us to a particular event; and *different* analogies may lead us *from* the *present* to numberless *different* future events.—Two analogies may *conspire*, and make us expect an event more strongly than either of them singly. Or, two analogies may *oppose* each other; in which case, our expectation will result from their difference; if they are *equal*, we may be in perfect doubt or *suspense*. Two analogies may be very strong, and yet their difference very small.—Or, two weaker analogies may counterbalance one stronger.

An analogy may be *interrupted* by another analogy; the first event, which interrupts an analogy, may be, and generally is, the beginning of a new analogy.—A man is seen riding at a certain place several days together; he is more and more expected; he misses one day, but it *rains*; this is an *interruption* of the old analogy, or the *beginning* of a new one: ere long, he is expected to omit riding every rainy day.

Sometimes an analogy may seem to lessen expectation; but it is only when some stronger analogy *overpowers* it, and yet is not so much attended to as the first:—you throw two dice, which come up aces six times together, would you expect them to come up aces the seventh time? no; your surprise would increase if they did; that is, repetition *lessens* expectation; yet if you saw a *comet* six nights together, you would expect it the seventh.—The case is, that, when the dice are thrown, you have already an *established* analogy leading you to expect, that one side of a die will come up as often as another:—We must be cautious, therefore, when we judge from one analogy, that we do not neglect others, which happen to be less striking.

When *circumstances* are changed, our analogy, how strong soever, instantly *vanishes*: this is according



cording to the *definition*, but is not always sufficiently *noticed*: what do I expect more fully, than that the *sun will set* to-night? the analogy, on which I expect this, has continued from my infancy, and has been wholly uninterrupted; place me near the *Pole*, my analogy is all dissipated, and I have to begin anew.—Hence we must be cautious, when we reason about distant analogies, which we do not *feel*, and which are remote from ordinary occurrences, how we adhere to conclusions drawn from any analogy with regard to facts, which happened in *circumstances* different from those, in which the analogy was formed. Our common habitual conclusions from experience, by which we guide ourselves in ordinary Life, and which we find to be right, upon trial, imply a number of *circumstances to continue the same*, which we do not distinctly attend to, and which we should not mention, if we explained the grounds of our belief: we imperceptibly confine our judgments and expectations to *limits*, of which we are not continually conscious \*. But the case is the same in *all habitual acts*, of body and mind; they are adapted and adjusted to circumstances, much more minutely than we are aware of.

The more any man knows of the causes of appearances, the more he is aware, that any *analogy may be broken*.—When I was young, I felt no surprise at the return of the summer or winter; and, I imagine, the unthinking † peasant takes all usual changes

\* Expecting *ships* to arrive, adapts itself to and presupposes a continuance of *Peace*: expecting the *Sun* to rise is on *condition* that the Planetary System does not change; nor our situation on our own Globe, very greatly.

† Mr. Hume says, that Violations of Laws of Nature are admitted chiefly by the *ignorant* and Barbarous.—p. 133. thirdly. Also p. 146.—But the truth may be, that the ignorant man, having

changes in natural phænomena as things of course: but now, the days never grow longer in spring without exciting in my mind a pretty strong sentiment of *wonder*, or admiration: and even in those instances in which I reflect the least, I should be less struck with a *real* change of what we call the Laws of Nature, than a Peasant would be, though he would believe accounts of things supernatural sooner than I should. In judging therefore from analogy, we must not proportion the probability of a continuance of a Law of Nature to the thoughtless confidence, with which it is expected; any more than we should think a sanguine temper a proof of future prosperity. Improvements in knowledge and reasoning make real violations of laws of nature more easily admitted, not less easily.

Common people, when a thing is said to be *impossible*\*, do not distinguish between real impossibility and a degree of improbability which, in fact, leaves no doubt: on many occasions, the distinction need not be made, and the Scripture sometimes neglects it, using natural, popular language;—but though, *in common life*, it may be neglected, yet, in *extraordinary* situations, it should be always ready at hand. *Improbability*, in whatever degree, is always inferred from *Analogy*, that is,

having thought very little, does not feel much *difference* between Laws of Nature founded on facts, and such as have only *imagination* to support them. His habitual expectations have perhaps no *diffidence*, but they are not founded on *knowledge*: He is *indifferent*, both as to the *continuance* and the *change* of the course of Nature. Or rather, his habitual conformity to *old* Phænomena does not afford him reason to *disbelieve new*.—He is less *aware* of the mutability of the course of nature, yet more ready to allow without good reason that course to have changed in any *instance*. He is most prepared to admit a *pretended* change, least to admit a *real* one.

\* Hume on Miracles, p. 141. 8vo. this quoted by Leland, Letter xviii, p. 295.



is, from *past* events; *impossibility*, in the strict sense, has nothing to do with experience, analogy, or *past* events.

Though we speak with a view to miracles, we speak of the nature of *expectation*; that is, though we speak of the credibility of *past* events, our observations seem all to relate to *future* events. And it may go a good way towards settling what *past* events are credible, if we can determine what events are to be expected, on a footing of probability; but yet it should not be wholly omitted, that I may have *no reason to expect* an event, though I may have *no doubt* of its credibility, when it is said to have happened: a friend of mine has a ticket in the *Lottery*, I do not *expect* that he will have the highest prize; probability is very much against it: but, after the fact, he may easily make me *believe* that he has got it.

7. These remarks on the nature of our assent, grounded on analogy, will enable us to see, that Mr. Hume does not rightly oppose analogy to *Testimony*. When two things are opposed, in the way of argument, they should be quite *distinct* from one another; but analogy is partly *made up* of testimony; when we conclude from experience, we take in, not only our own experience, but that of *others*, which can only be known from testimony. Moreover, when two things are *opposed*, as far as one is *true*, the other should be *false*; whereas analogy and testimony, when set in opposition, may *both* be true. Analogy says, Lead falls; let testimony say, Lead rose the other day; here is *no contradiction*; all experience, prior to the event in question, may be for the falling of Lead, yet it might rise when it was said to do so.

8. According to Mr. Hume's argument, if men had always given testimony that was true, and a  
man

man told us he had seen Lead rise, the case would be one of *perfect doubt*; the experience of the falling of Lead was uniform, so was that of the veracity of man; and they were opposed (Mr. Hume would say) to each other, so as to counterbalance one another exactly. But it seems as if this equilibrium could not be inferred without some *false suppositions*.

1st. The course of *nature* is here supposed more *fixed* than we know it to be;—as just now explained.

2. Testimony is supposed to be perfectly *distinct*, and separate from analogy; or, what we call experience, is supposed to be all our *own*.

3. It seems taken for granted, that the analogy in favor of a law of nature, cannot be *interrupted* by any other analogy.

4. But the principal wrong supposition is, that our experience of human testimony is only a *single* analogy; such as it would be, if man were irrational or *inanimate*; as if he were an *automaton*, the construction of which we are wholly ignorant of; void of sense, reason, passions, conscience, such as we perceive in ourselves. Whereas, besides the analogy which we have from viewing man *externally*, we have *several* analogies from viewing him *internally*; that is, from knowing his *motives* of action. Man acts through fear of *shame*,—man acts through love of *virtue* \*;—man acts from a desire of being *trusted*, respected, beloved;—all these experiences make a very *compound* and strong analogy. It may indeed be said, Man acts from love of *money*;—but this only shews, that regard must be had to the *characters* of witnesses, when their testimony is received: the generality of men are prompted to speak truth, and restrained from falsehood, by many things of which we have some tolerable conception; we know of nothing to prevent

\* Mr. Hume says much the same in *some* places; but without the same *effect*.



prevent Lead from rising, or any other common appearance of Nature from being reversed.

Let not any one here say, we have no immediate insight into the human \* *mind*;—that may be a very good metaphysical argument, but it is a very insufficient one in practice: and he who uses it, must, if he will be consistent, trust all men equally.

9 If what has been *last* said, needs any *illustration*, it may receive one from supposing *two clocks* to go together for some days, and then to vary; so long as they strike together, they make but a *single Analogy*, and they are *expected* to strike on, after equal intervals; but they vary: one strikes before the other; which of them has gone wrong? *Common people* must be at a loss, having two simple analogies opposed to each other, of equal strength; but if a person, who understands the make of these machines, is present, he can form a judgment from a *compound analogy*; he knows their *internal* construction, and from his general experience can judge better of the causes of the failure than those, who have nothing to judge from but the mere striking.

10. Our conclusion is, that, supposing no instance of false testimony, we should not be in perfect *doubt*; but the testimony of a single witness would be enough to prove a violation or transgression of what we call a Law of Nature, that is, to prove the reality of a *Miracle*. Nor do I conceive that, in such case, any one would have ever thought of disbelieving.

11. Now may we not, instead of *one* witness, (when we suppose no false testimony to have been ever given) *substitute* such evidence as has *never been known* to mislead?—this is indeed regarding men  
*externally*

\* Hume, Sect. 8. p. 94. &c. "the same motives produce always the same actions;" &c. "Ambition, Avarice," &c. &c.

*externally*, but yet, when we have *such* testimony of *human beings*, we have more reason to trust to that, than to trust to the continuance of what we call a Law of Nature; as we know more of its nature and essence.—Speaking without any idea of substitution, we may affirm, that such testimony as has never been known to deceive, is sufficient to make a *miracle* credible: because it may be taken as valid proof; and we have no proof equally valid of the continuance of any Law of *nature*: our testimony has *never* deceived us, our experience has often deceived us.—Indeed, if the testimony is such as has never been known to deceive, the thing to be proved need only be naturally *possible*: we have reason to believe it.

12. But, supposing the analogy in favor of the continuance of the Law of nature to be only exactly counterbalanced by Testimony, in any particular case, yet the analogy may be *interrupted* by another analogy, which may reasonably be admitted\*. We have constant experience, that rational agents use *extraordinary measures* on extraordinary *occasions*; if, therefore, any extraordinary emergency were to occur, we should even have ground to *expect* a transgression of ordinary rules: this would give the testimony, whatever it happened to be, great additional force. It is said, there must be an uniform experience against a miracle, in order to make it a miracle; but this experience is only in one single *track*; there may be analogies in *other tracks*, which may make a miracle to be, in some measure, *conformable* to experience.

In this case, *circumstances* † are altered; by which means the analogy may be much weakened, or entirely destroyed. If I were asked, why I disbelieve commonly

\* Sect. 6, of this Chap. and Dr. Powell, p. 97.

† Sect. 6.



commonly miraculous stories, I should answer, because they are offered within the limits of *ordinary* experience; in the regions, where we rightly trust to Analogy; without any new circumstances, any opening or enlarging of our views. Nay, we have Analogy, that such accounts *will* deceive us.

Besides, if we may judge of the *reasons* why the Governor of the world should fix Laws of Nature in any degree, we must conclude, that those reasons may not have place in extraordinary emergencies: our expectations may be disappointed in such cases, and yet they may be left intire for all common *uses*, or purposes of human Life.

If then we suppose such a case as the publication of a *new Religion*, like the *Christian*, there is more to be presumed in favor of miracles, than against them. What other *credentials* can we imagine so proper? What so *likely* as that something supernatural should be performed? What possible difficulty in the way?

13. On the whole, since Mr. Hume's argument against the credibility of Miracles depends upon the strength of *Analogy*, and the weakness of *Testimony*; and is only this, that Testimony cannot prove a Transgression of a Law of Nature;—since we have shewn, that he does not rightly oppose these one to the other; and have proved how much weaker analogy is in itself, and how much stronger \* testimony is in itself, than Mr. Hume allows: since we have shewn also, that any analogy is liable to be

\* This part scarcely appears in the force it might do; if a man say, that one thing balances another, and you find, upon examination, that the first thing is much lighter than it was reckoned, and the second much heavier: the equiponderance is very much broken into indeed: the lightness of the first, alone, would have destroyed the equipoise; and so would the heaviness of the second, alone: how great then must be the effect of the causes when conjoined!

be *interrupted* by other analogies ; and to be weakened or destroyed by change of *circumstances* ; that *extraordinary* cases are always *likely* to be attended with extraordinary measures : and that the regularity of the movements and operations of Nature may answer all its *purposes*, though something supernatural be performed on the *first publication* of such a Religion as the Christian ;—we seem to have intirely removed Mr. Hume's objection, and to have *proved* the *credibility* of miracles *in general*.

14. But, however conclusive our reasoning may be, it may be useful to suppose, that some men are not convinced by it: to such we would say, that they ought not wholly to *refuse* their consent, if they do not wholly give it. There are various *degrees* of assenting and of dissenting ; at least in *practice* ; we may determine to *adopt* a measure, and yet may do it with great diffidence ; in which case, we shall not be positive, nor hazard much upon our determination : on the other hand, we may *reject* a measure with great doubts of our own judgment ; and our conduct will be indecisive accordingly. If then, in the case of miracles, any one unhappily feels a want of conviction, he is not to think, that he is to adopt a decided opposition to the notion of their credibility ; he should rather say, they *may* have been performed, though he is not fully persuaded that they have been.

This is a matter worth insisting upon separately, because we may presume, that one great end of miracles is to excite attention, and to set men upon a serious examination : this end may be answered without a full belief : let men only *not reject* credentials, and they may be led to examine particulars : and the more carefully they consider either the *doctrines* of the Christian Religion, or the *conduct* of those who published it, the more likely are they to embrace it.

15. Men



15. Men are apt to run into a fallacy, in judging from probability; they are apt to take it for granted, that what is against probability, cannot be true; whereas many events fall out against probability; otherwise he who, in a wager, laid on the probable side must always win. Certainly every man ought to determine to *act* after the best judgment he can form; but he should remember, that, so long as his judgment is only a probable judgment, it may lead him into error:—the forgetting of this, is sometimes hurtful to religion: a man thinks the difficulties attending any opinion, overbalance the arguments urged in favor of it: he therefore takes up the negative side, and thinks he has nothing more to do with the affirmative: thinks he may at once banish all doubt and perplexity, and cease from all farther inquiry; whereas it may often happen, that the negative side is to be taken in our *conduct*, when the question demands still *farther deliberation*.

When the King \* of Siam disbelieved the existence of ice, Mr. Hume says he *reasoned justly*; we say he *concluded falsely*: A man may, however, have taken the most probable side, though he be wrong. Let us suppose, that this prince had more reason to disbelieve than to believe; yet, if his *judgment* was not wrong, at least the *peremptoriness*, with which he rejected the improbable side, was surely so. “Now,” says he, “I am *sure* you lie.”—Would he not have been more reasonable, had he said something of this sort? “What you assert seems so very strange, that I cannot believe it; it is unlike any thing I ever saw. Water, which, you say, is in Holland sometimes hard enough to allow men to walk upon it, seems to be so very soft, that softness is its chief property: I have

• Locke's Essay, 4. 15. 5.

I have not yet known you deceive me, but Travel-  
 lers are apt to exaggerate. It is not necessary, that  
 I should form a judgment on this matter just at  
 present; if I am obliged to *act* one way or other, I  
 will take that side, which seems most probable;  
 but, as I know nothing of the *nature of water*, or  
 of that *internal* make on which its properties depend,  
 and what you tell me is said to happen at a great  
*distance*, and in *circumstances* very different from those  
 in which I am placed, I will not entirely *reject* your  
 account; though to me the report of the hardness  
 of water may be improbable, yet what is impro-  
 bable may prove true: and, on the whole, I will,  
 if ever I have occasion to act, take such measures as  
 to be *secure*, if possible, on *whichever* side the Truth  
 shall prove to lie." — Had the Prince spoken in  
 some way like this, the Europeans would not have  
 blamed him: and the *Infidel* would do well  
 to pursue the same plan: so much may be said,  
 without taking for granted the point in dispute;  
 without presuming, that he *must* be in an error.

16. A follower of Mr. Hume would offer a  
 distinction here between an *extraordinary* \* event,  
 and a *miraculous* one. A miraculous event, he would  
 say, is a contradiction to our experience in well  
*known* circumstances; or all *circumstances continuing*  
*the same*; an *extraordinary* event is one "not con-  
 formable" to our experience, in circumstances  
*unknown*: or, is only an instance of a Law of  
 Nature *newly observed*, in circumstances somewhat  
*like*, but *not the same*: an event that, to *some* men,  
 is of an *ordinary* sort. I do not think this † distinc-  
 tion materially affects our Question, yet as it may  
 be *thought* to do so, I will take some notice of it.

There

\* Hume on Miracles, Essays, 8vo. Vol. 2. p. 128, note.

† This is something like the distinction between *τερας* and  
*σημειον*. Parkhurst's Lex. under *τερας*. from Mintert and Etymol.



There is certainly a great *difference* between a *natural* and a *supernatural* event, as also between the *pretensions* of those, who would persuade us of the truth of one and the other. And it seems very *proper* to attend to these distinctions, in order to enlarge and to clear up our conceptions. A natural event takes place in a course of nature, according to some general rules; a supernatural event takes place by a particular volition of some Being superior to Nature, and independently, at least, of those general Rules.—And, when men persuade us to believe a natural event, they stand in a different light from that in which they are when they would persuade us to believe a supernatural event: yet we should be aware, that we do not know one sort of event from the other intuitively, or immediately, in any instance; though their difference, in theory, is plain enough. When an event is proposed for our belief as a *miracle*, we have *two* things to ask; did this event really happen?—suppose it did happen, was it miraculous? we can only determine either question on probable grounds: but probability is the guide of human Life, in every thing.—We should moreover be aware, that any sort of event may be either natural or supernatural; that which we deem natural (as a cure, &c.) may be supernatural, and that which we deem supernatural, may possibly be natural. But our probable judgment, if we are honest, will be a sufficient guide.—In order to judge whether a fact be miraculous, it must be *familiar*; if it be very *remote*, our ideas will be very *faint*, both as to the fact having happened, and as to its being miraculous. Suppose a *Missionary* had accompanied the Dutch Ambassador to the King of Siam, and had affirmed, that St. Peter walked upon the water (Matt. xiv. 25, 29. John xxi. 7.), perhaps the  
King

King would sooner have believed the Missionary than the Ambassador; 'Ay, now you give me a *reason*,' he might have said.—On the contrary, some would believe perhaps the natural event, the walking on *Ice*, more easily, than the supernatural event, the walking upon water, as a proof of divine Interposition. However that might be, the events are certainly totally *distinct*: and nothing relating to the strangeness of the natural event, could any way affect our reasoning on the supernatural one. The *Ambassador* would say, 'Water sometimes hardens in Holland, so that people walk upon it; but that is nothing supernatural; it does so every winter,' &c.—The *Missionary* would say, 'St. Peter walked on the water, not when it was *frozen*, nor according to any general Law of *Nature*, but when it was in its *fluid* state, as the Indian Rivers are,' &c. on purpose to shew, by a *supernatural* power, the truth of the Religion of Jesus, just then beginning to be published. How could one of these explanations possibly *interfere* with the other?

17. There is *another distinction*, which I look upon to be very *important*: and that is, between expecting *like* events, and disbelieving *unlike*.

We are perpetually deceived by our *imagination*: a jingle of words, a slight resemblance of things, or a seeming contrast, carries all our reasonings before it. Because we, by habit, expect *like* things to follow in like circumstances, we take for granted, that we ought to *oppose* our expectation to *unlike* things. But our expectation is merely *facitious* and mechanical; it has nothing to do out of its proper place; take away the chain of events, to which it has owed its birth, and growth, and on which it constantly depends, and it is perfectly *useless*; nay, it loses its very *being*. The illustration



tion used before \*, about change of circumstances, might be applied here. Nothing should be conceived as *belonging* to any analogy, but *the train* of events, on which it is founded, and the expectations arising from them; to admit any other kind of conclusion, is to admit what is perfectly groundless, and must of course lead to error.

Though expecting an event, may make us feel some shock when it does not happen; yet a shock at missing a *step* does not make us disbelieve any thing; or, though we feel some expectation that nothing will happen that is *inconsistent* with an expected event; yet we must not deceive ourselves: we have no right to *encourage* the latter sort of expectation; to be justified in expecting *like* events, we need only have had *experience*; to be justified in disbelieving *unlike*, we should know all the powers of Nature, all the designs of God.

18. There seems to be one *unsteadiness* in Mr. Hume's reasoning, which should be noted: he seems not always to keep perfectly distinct the two ideas; "we *do not* believe"—and "we † *ought not* to believe:"—he seems sometimes to take our *actual* disbelief as a *proof*, that we *ought* to disbelieve;—and yet sometimes he *blames* us for believing. Whereas, if our disbelieving was an argument that we *ought* to disbelieve; our believing should be an argument that we *ought* to believe. I will not dwell long here, as that would detain us too long, in a matter not very important; and as perhaps some part of the unsteadiness, I speak of, may be found in most men's reasonings about the force of experience, and is to be ascribed to what has been mentioned before, that Analogy is a part of *Logic*, which has not been well attended to ‡. I will therefore  
content

\* Sect. 6.

† P. 131. 8vo.

‡ Intr. to Butler's Analogy, referred to under sect. 6, beginning.

content myself with suggesting the idea to Mr. Hume's readers; they will examine more particularly, and determine for themselves.—In order to set all belief of miracles in a contemptible light, those *faults* are enumerated, which occasion their being believed *too easily*. And then it is to follow, that, however careful men are, if they believe at all, their belief is owing to those faults. And this artifice does succeed, too frequently.

19. The principal fault in men which makes them receive accounts of miracles too easily, is *credulity*: and the reason why men reject the belief of miracles, is a dread of being *despised* for credulity, as a weakness unworthy of a man of sense. Incredulity they are not near so much ashamed of, but yet, when one comes to think, they both imply error, nay, as before observed,\* both the same kind of error, following a weaker probability in preference to a stronger. And surely, taking equal distances from the Truth, the credulous man may be as wise as the incredulous;—incredulity rejects the experience of other men, and neglects warnings and cautions; credulity only (in a common way) carries caution to excess. Both may doubtless be hurtful; and incredulity has less the appearance of being duped, to ordinary judges; but to a real Philosopher, the credulous man will appear as rational as the incredulous.

20. The belief of miracles is also owing, we are told, to the pleasure of indulging the passion or sentiment of *Admiration*; and other passions or sentiments, which get involved in miraculous stories:—and so it is to be insinuated, that, if it was not for this pleasure, Miracles would never be believed at all. Admiration is certainly a very  
pleasing

\* Chap xii. Sect. 16.



pleasing and interesting sentiment, and great advantages have been taken of it to lead men into error; but that all facts, which have excited admiration, are to be disbelieved, is a very extravagant conclusion.—The observation affords sufficient reason why we should examine carefully into the circumstances attending miracles, and consider whether the witnesses of them are enthusiastic, or superstitious; it gives us a right to require, that they should be calm, reasonable, sober-minded; as well as ingenuous, and lovers of truth; but it can carry us no farther.—Any passion may be an occasion of self-deceit, or of falsehood; those who wish much to gratify it, and make little resistance, will gratify it at any rate; with truth, if they can; if not, with falsehood; but surely no one, on this account, despairs of distinguishing truth from falsehood, when the inquiry seems worthy of attention. Love of Praise, Resentment, Ambition, have given birth to numberless falsehoods; but have not such falsehoods been often discoverable? nay, have they not generally been founded on truth? could they have succeeded in any degree, without some assistance from truth?

21. I have no doubt but that the accounts of a very great number of miracles, which we find in Books, are without foundation in truth: but surely that does not make *all* miracles incredible. Many ancient writings, heathen as well as Christian, are most probably forged, but every one believes, that some are genuine. In all subjects, falsehood is mixed with truth; it would not be reasonable to give up the truth on that account;—to separate truth from falsehood, is the great business of the human understanding; and that from which it will receive the greatest improvement. Flatterers may mix with real friends, but we are not to give  
up

up Friendship because, in some instances, we have had reason to suspect flattery.

In fact, the forged miracles have been very *filly* businesſes, and have, by their folly, made those, which we believe, more, not less, estimable.

22. We have indeed reason enough to restrain our credulity, and guard ourselves against the excesses of our devout admiration and other seducing passions; if we could go farther, and settle some *criteria* of true miracles, it might answer many good purposes. The great difficulty seems to be, that any criteria might give occasion to new forgeries, more artful than the preceding; but still perhaps something might be done. As this subject is to be resumed in the next chapter, we may treat it the more briefly here:

True miracles may be frequently distinguished from false, by the *occasions* on which they are performed, by the *manner* and the *matter* of them.

If they are performed on common and trivial *occasions*, they are suspicious; for a considerable part of the proof of their credibility arose from their being extraordinary measures, taken upon extraordinary occasions. If they are said to have been performed at times, when things were in an ordinary train, or in support of a religion well established, or of a powerful party, or of folly and fanaticism, they are suspicious: whereas, if they are said to have been performed, when any great and important *change* was taking place in the Dispensations of Heaven, when the supporters of true religion were very weak, and in favour of rational religion and improved morality, they then seem *reasonable*, and therefore are, upon competent testimony, *credible*.

A judgment might be built upon the *manner* in which miracles should be performed: a modest,



simple, sober manner would make miracles much more credible than a proud, ostentatious, fanatical manner.

If the *matter* shewed a regular *plan*, a durable and constant attention to some great and rational purpose, it could not but add to their credibility.

*Chambers* says, in his Dictionary, the criteria are *not agreed upon*; and perhaps there may always be doubt enough to exercise the understanding, and try the heart; yet much might be done, at any time, by one who was sincere and attentive. Nay, I know not why we might not refer something to the same powers of judging, which we have about prudence, beauty, virtue, &c. call it *common sense*, or what you please, which we scarce know the nature of distinctly ourselves. Only we must be aware, that, though we may put *some* confidence in our *feelings*, we should endeavour to analyze them, and to regulate them by reason and utility.



## C H A P. XVI.

OF THE CREDIBILITY OF THE MIRACLES RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND THE CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THEM.

WE are now to take for granted, that miracles *may be* wrought for the conviction of mankind: the next thing, according to our plan, is to consider, whether any *have been* wrought. And it might be sufficient, to refer to *Chap. XIII.* in which we shewed that the scripture narratives could not be fictitious; for those narratives do certainly contain accounts of miracles, and the writers were either witnesses of the miracles, or received their accounts from those who were.

But we will pursue the plan laid down in the Introduction to the 12th Chapter, and consider the witnesses of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, in respect of their *Ability*, their *Intention*, and their *Number*.

1. As to *Ability*. On what does the ability of witnesses, as such, depend?—wherein consists the perfection of it? Their being enabled to judge of what they testify, must depend upon the *things* witnessed, and upon the *personal* qualities of those who witness them. Or, if we use the word *see* as a general term, on the *things seen*, and the qualities of *those who see them*.

The *things* or events, in order that the Witnesses may be perfectly enabled to speak of them, must be *common*, such as the persons are *accustomed* to; must be *placed* within the *reach* of their *senses*, or other discerning powers, or must be related by the



witnesſes *immediately*, without interval of time or place; from time to time, ſo as to be liable to perpetual examination.—They ſhould moreover be *public*, expoſed on every ſide.

The *Perſons* ſhould poſſeſs all thoſe faculties of *Body* and *Mind* intire, which are requiſite for forming a perfect judgment of the events. They ſhould not only poſſeſs theſe ordinarily, but they ſhould have them *undisturbed* and uncorrupted at the time of beholding.—Now the faculties of the *body*, the ſenſes of ſight, hearing, &c. are apt to be impaired or diſordered by certain diſeaſes, or by intemperance of various kinds.—The faculties of the *mind* may be diſordered, in things of religion, by enthuſiaſtic furor, by ſuperſtitious panics, by a too rapturous devotion, by a courſe of ſevere mortification and aſterity.—In ſome ſenſe alſo, and in effect, the faculties of the mind may be ſaid to be diſordered by any inordinate paſſion; a ſpirit of party, a love of gain, ambition, &c. are ſometimes ſpoken of as diſabling a man from forming a right judgment, and getting a true knowledge of things; and, as far as they do this, they belong to the *Ability* of witneſſes, rather than to their *Intention*. *St. Paul* ſpeaks of the God of this world as having *blinded* the minds of ſome men\*. The *blind* are *unable* to ſee; literally, and therefore figuratively.

2. Applying theſe obſervations to the characters of the *ſacred* witneſſes, would give us an idea of their ability. The miraculous powers exerciſed by Jeſus were exemplified in the moſt *familiar* inſtances; in *cures* of well-known diſeaſes, in raiſing an human being from a ſtate of death.—No uncommon knowledge of natural Philoſophy, Chemistry, or arts, was neceſſary to comprehend them; they were not remote, or hidden on any ſide; they were

\* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

were not done in a corner\*; this is true of the Miracles of the New Testament in general, particularly so of that performed on the great day of Pentecost. When related by an original witness to another, they seem to have been *related immediately*, and continually.

The witnesses were healthy, sober, temperate: men of sober minds; of piety free from flightiness and extravagance. Nor do they seem to have been influenced by any love of gain, ambition, party spirit, which could blind their understandings. We find them indeed desirous of distinguished places in the Kingdom of Christ, during his life-time; but they could have no hopes of Honours after his Death. Mr *Hume* thinks, that there is no “greater temptation than to appear a missionary†, a Prophet, an ambassador from Heaven:” but those, who were actuated by such motives, would make the best advantage of their situation, whereas the preachers of Christianity we find restraining men from paying them too high honours. *Paul* and *Barnabas*‡, with all marks of earnestness, say to those, who would treat them as Gods, “why do ye these things? we also are *men*, of like passions with *you*.”—But here we *approach* rather too near perhaps to the subject of good *intention* in the witnesses.

3. Mr. *Hume* has an invidious remark§, intimating, that the miracles of the Gospel would not have been believed, had not they been first published amongst an “*ignorant and barbarous people*;” so he || calls the Jews.—*Lucian* gives an account, in his *Pseudomantis*, of one *Alexander*, an Impostor, who set up an Oracle in *Paphlagonia*, which had great success there, and some even at *Rome*.

Mr.

\* Acts xxvi. 26.

§ P. 134. 8vo.

† P. 142. 8vo.

|| P. 146. 8vo.

‡ Acts xiv. 15.



Mr. Hume says, it was a wise policy, in this Impostor, to lay the first scene of his Impostures where “the people were extremely ignorant and stupid, and ready to swallow even the grossest delusion.”—Had he “fixed his residence at Athens,” philosophers would have spread abroad the delusion, and would have “intirely opened the eyes of mankind.” Mr. Hume farther insinuates, that, if there had been a Lucian to give an account of St. Paul, as well as of Alexander, our Apostle would have appeared in a very different light from that, in which he is represented by Lord Lyttelton, in his Letter to Mr. Gilbert West.

In the first place, it seems odd, that Mr. Hume should fix upon an instance, in order to rank Christianity amongst impostures, which all Christians would most readily fix upon, in order to shew, that the early Christians were enemies to impostures. Lucian was no way partial to Christians, yet, in this History of Alexander, he speaks of the Christians as those, who opposed and detected his cheats; nay, Lucian relates, that, when people were to be kept off from inspecting Alexander’s mysteries, the Christians were particularly forbidden to spy into them; Alexander\* himself, or some one presiding, thrusting the people away, and crying, *ἐξω χριστιανους*, away with the Christians.—How could Mr. Hume overlook this? or why should he forbear to mention it?—For my own part, I wish St. Paul *had* had his Lucian: if Lucian had given as circumstantial an account of St. Paul, as he has done of Alexander, I should not vote for a Letter of it being destroyed. And, I believe, all rational Christians would now recover, if they could, the Strictures of Lucian’s dear Friend, *Celsus*.—The Christian cause derives considerable

\* The Greek is, *Και ὁ μὲν ἠγείτο*: the Latin (of Erasmus) “illo præeunte.”

considerable good from what is found in the works of *Lucian*.

But, to call the Jews “an ignorant and barbarous people,” when the subject in hand is *religion*, is surely a gross misrepresentation; whatever progress they might have made in Arts and Sciences, they certainly were the *only people* in the world, who worshipped *one invisible God*, the patron of no vices. Rome and Athens were before them in many things, but, in *Religion*, infinitely behind them; nor must it be said, that they attended more to their sacrifices and other *rites* than to the Spiritual nature of God; for their ceremonies were only modes of worshipping *one holy spiritual Deity*; and some were *Profelytes* amongst them, who *only* adopted their principles of *Natural Religion*\*. The question is, supposing Christianity *false*, where would it have been first *rejected*? at Rome, or at Jerusalem? I say, at Jerusalem: any absurd religion would have much sooner made its way at Rome or Athens than there: indeed, the more enlightened at Rome or Athens might have rejected *some kinds* of religious † absurdity, but *all ranks* amongst the Jews would have rejected *all kinds*.—Again, supposing the Christian Religion reasonable and *true*, where would it have been most readily *accepted*? at Jerusalem clearly.—Would the higher ranks at Rome or Athens have submitted to be poor in spirit? would the pride of Philosophy have condescended to be taught? would the lower ranks, or even any ranks, have demolished their *Idols*? But principally,

\* This, at least, is a received opinion. It must be owned, that Lardner has argued ably to prove, that the Jews had only one sort of Profelytes amongst them, namely, those who, not having been born Jews, had embraced the Jewish Religion. See Lardner's Works, Index, *Profelytes*.

† Yet see Chap. xii. Sect. 16, how superstitious *Pliny, Julian, &c.* were; and Marcus Aurelius, Hume p. 134, bottom.



principally, would *any* ranks have agreed to worship one invisible God in Spirit and in Truth?—At Jerusalem, the spirituality of the Christian Religion must be its greatest recommendation.—The Jews, indeed, by being separated from Idolaters, did acquire too high notions of their being the Favourites of God, to the exclusion of other men: This was a fault; but not so universal as to prevent the reception of Profelytes, nor such an one as would make the Jews less ready, than any even the most polished Heathens, to accept a rational religion.

But, suppose the Jews had been “ignorant and “barbarous,” Jesus could not be said to *chuse* them; the Christian Religion *must* be grafted on the Jewish; Christ was the *Messiah* of Jews; Jesus had no choice.

4. With regard to the *intention* of the witnesses of the Gospel-miracles;—the perfection of intention is, if we may be allowed the expression, to have no intention at all. To speak facts with artless simplicity, without any particular views; to attend to the facts, and record them naturally, and clearly, and to attend to nothing else. It is not commonly seen how much good simplicity implies, nor how consistent it is with the highest intellectual endowments. The wisest, the most learned of men, may be the most simple; for simplicity is only freedom from duplicity; from deceit and disguise; it is speaking from real opinions, and real feelings, and not from such as are only pretended.

5. That the witnesses of the *Gospel*-miracles answered to this description, may have already appeared in some degree; when it was proved, that the *writers* of the Gospel-narratives were \* artless: indeed, all the witnesses, whom we could call in support

\* Chap. xiii. Sect. 10, 11.

support of the miracles of which we are treating, have every mark of a disinterested spirit, and of perfect freedom from indirect purposes. It has been remarked, that the writers recorded the most wonderful things, without any *epithets*, or other expressions of wonder; this looks like simplicity, and such as they would not have thought of affecting. As Converts, they gave up every thing, they suffered every thing, and they suffered in such a manner as to shew, that, after they had lost their Lord, and set themselves seriously to execute the Trust delegated to them, they knew what manner of spirit they were of.—They were not only clear of any inordinate passion, which could blind their judgment, but from any, which should lay any inducements in their way to give any false accounts voluntarily, with any corrupt design.—It may, indeed, occur to an objector to say, why should the witnesses be Christians? that is, partizans?—the short answer is, the professed witnesses could not be otherwise; supposing the miracles real: and what would happen, supposing them real, cannot be liable to objection.

6. As to the *number* of those, who might with propriety be called witnesses of the Gospel-Miracles, it is very great indeed; but it seems as if we should, in the first place, confine ourselves to the *same* witnesses, that we may be supposed to have kept in mind, whilst we were speaking of their ability and intention.

In order to avoid any suspicion of surreptitiously enlarging the idea affixed to the word witnesses, in what has been just now said, we will first suppose, that the number is only *twelve*, which, considering that the *Apostles* were twelve, and that Mark, Luke, Paul, Barnabas, must have been witnesses to many miracles, and must have had many more related to them



them immediately, from time to time, is a very small number;—if it is an even chance\*, that each of these speaks the truth singly, then the probability, that the truth is spoken, when they all twelve agree, is 4096 to one.—And, if we suppose it three to one, that any one of twelve speaks truth, then the probability, that what they all agree in is truth, is, if I mistake not, 19,297,215 to one.

This being the case, what numbers would express the probability, were we to calculate upon the hundreds that saw our Saviour after his resurrection, the thousands that were fed miraculously with Loaves and Fishes; the thousands that were present on the famous day of Pentecost!

It does not seem absolutely necessary to add more, concerning the number of witnesses of the New Testament-miracles, yet, as we have laid down some principles in the 14th Chapter, it may not be amiss to give a few examples relative to the present subject.

The miracles of Christ have never been contradicted.

They have been acknowledged unwillingly.

They have been absurdly accounted for.

They are spoken of in Letters, as known to those, to whom the Letters were addressed: though,  
as

\* A *coin* has 2 sides, Head and Reverse:— $\frac{1}{2}$  represents the probability, I think, that *one* such coin does not come up head; or it is 1 : 1;—the probability, that *two* do not come up heads, is  $\frac{1}{2^2}$ , or it is 3 : 1; the probability, that *n* don't come up heads, is  $\frac{1}{2^n}$  or  $2^n - 1 : 1$ .

A *Die* has 6 sides; suppose only one side blue; 'tis 5 : 1 the blue side does not come up in *one* die: the probability in *n* dies is  $\frac{1}{6^n}$  that *all* don't come up with the blue side; or the chance is  $6^n - 1 : 1$ ;—if *n* be 3, as 215 : 1.

as the subjects of the Epistles were controversial, and Churches were a good deal settled when they were written, miracles are not very frequently referred to in them.

Persons are called upon or attested as having been present, when miracles were performed, or as having had immediate information of them.—Nicodemus might be reckoned in the number; perhaps the Samaritan woman; Joseph of Arimathea;—and *almost*, Agrippa.—I consider these as attested by *name*, though we have not the name of the Samaritan woman.

Others were attested without being specified: and it will be always proper for the reader of the New Testament, when he finds expressions about miracles, signs, wonders, &c. to consider before whom they were spoken.—John x. 24, 25. as also ver. 37, 38. were spoken at the *Encænion*.—John xiv. 11. only to the disciples. Acts ii. 22. was at the feast of Pentecost. Heb. ii. 3, 4. was addressed probably to a large number, and of persons inclined to Judaism.

Lastly, the Miracles of the New Testament are proved by their effects; this has been mentioned before; and will occur again.

This is, on the whole, a Testimony which has never been known to mislead: and one which we may safely trust.

7. On the subject of Miracles, it seems proper to take some notice of the opinion of Woolston, that the Miracles of Christ were *Allegorical*. This opinion, in the first part or Quarter of the present Century, made a great noise in the Christian world, and called out many writers of high rank: several Bishops attacked it; Bishop Gibson thought fit to provide even the People of his Diocese with an Antidote against it: and since that, Dr. Lardner and others



others have opposed some parts of the discourses, in which it is maintained. Yet the opinion seems too wild to be dangerous; for who is likely to believe, that Christ did no real miracles, if it be allowed that he did some things, which could be called Allegorical miracles? Indeed, it might be asked, what is *meant* by miracles being allegorical?—are the relations allegorical? like that of the choice of Hercules? and such as we find in the Spectator? did Christ do nothing? did he speak? did he use gestures? For an answer, we must refer to Woolston himself; and I think myself fortunate in having his Book, as it is not in the University Library, nor in that of Trinity College. “The Gospel,” he says, “is in no sort a literal story;—the History of Jesus’s Life is only an emblematical representation of his spiritual Life in the souls of men”——“neither the Fathers, nor the Apostles, nor Jesus himself meant, that his miracles should be taken in the literal, but in the mystical and parabolical sense.”—These expressions are quoted by *Leland* in his view of Deistical writers; but I will give you some *specimens* of his mystical interpretations.

You will say, after reading these specimens, could this folly give so general an alarm? one would think not; and therefore I once thought this only a *pretence*\*, and the real design of the author to be to raise cavils against the miracles of Christ.—The miracles, he argues, are allegorical; and this is proved by proving that, in the literal sense, they are absurd: but I had an idea that he cared more about his means than his end: I now think, from the series

\* The infidel writers used generally to pretend, that they were friends to Christianity: See Toland’s *Amyntor*, Hume on Miracles, near the end.—Woolston Let. 1. p. 3. 6.

series of his works, that he was sincere in what he \* professed. Nevertheless, I am still of opinion, that the thing which really gave the alarm, was not the Hypothesis, but the arguments by which it was supported. Had he simply maintained, that Miracles were Allegorical, he would probably have been left to his own fancies; but, when he shewed this by the medium of abuse on the Christian miracles, he grew dangerous. And his manner, towards the latter part of his Life, got to be such as was likely to be laid hold on by the Scorners, and to be a dangerous weapon in his hand.

The way to clear up difficulties is generally to have recourse to *History*; in the present case, the *History of the Life of the Author* would answer our purpose: and I am interested in it by having been a member of the same Society with the Author, though not a cotemporary. His name was *Thomas Woolston*, he was born at Northampton, and received his School Education there and at Daventry: he was admitted of Sidney college in 1685; was studious and exemplary, and at the same time chearful and pleasant; he was both esteemed and beloved. He was chosen Fellow in 1690, and took his degree of B. D. in 1699. About that time, he composed some exercises, which he afterwards reduced into one *Treatise*, on the *Time* of our Saviour's coming into the world; though it was not *published* till 1722. It is reckoned rational, learned, and ingenious; one of the best† Theological Tracts we have: I have never been able to procure it.—But  
he

\* Yet I think, from Misanthropy, &c. he had great pleasure in refuting, as he thought, opinions generally maintained by the hireling Clergy.—We may observe how *large* a part of his Letters is taken up in objections to the received sense, when compared with the part which explains the mystical sense.

† Biogr. Britan.



he soon took a kind of fantastic and enthusiastic turn in studying the Scripture; he compared the Old Testament with the New:—certainly the connecting ties are extremely numerous, and some of them fine and delicate, by means of Types, Prophecies, symbolical actions and words, and allusions; but any thing may be carried too far: he was very learned, his imagination began to be powerful; at last, he saw nothing but typical actions and expressions in the Old Testament, and nothing but spiritual and mystical meanings in the New. The Fathers, by moralizing and spiritualizing, by their Christian Cabbala, helped him forward; particularly *Origen*\*. And his sequestered Life might have its effect. In 1705 he printed, at the University Press, (with licence, of course) his *Old Apology*, which runs great lengths; though it is confined to the *Old Testament*, and does not give an allegorical sense to any fact of the New: His *Moderator* also seems confined to Prophecies of the Old Testament; only those prophecies have their interpretations in the New. He *moderated* between *Collins* and his Opponents, of whom some mention will be made in the next chapter. In this *Moderator*, he gave some intimations of his plan; but afterwards, heated by opposition, in his *Six Discourses*, he went to a degree of extravagance, which began to look like real *Blasphemy*. A prosecution was commenced against him by the Attorney General (afterwards Lord Chancellor Hardwicke) and he was sentenced to Fine and Imprisonment by Chief Justice Raymond. In prison he ended his Life, unable

\* Lardner, in his account of Origen (Credib. chap. 38,) owns, that he sometimes "gives a vast scope to his fancy," (See Cave's Hist. Lit. 1. p. 115.) but yet he observes, that Origen "treats those as Heretics, who allegorize the History of Christ's *miracles* of healing *diseases*, as if nothing else was meant but healing the *Soul*, &c."

unable to pay the fine; and refusing to find sureties, because he was determined to write with his usual freedom.

It does not seem very difficult, in this train, to account for any thing in Woolston's writings, except his derision: in support of any singular opinion, a friend to Christianity would generally be decent; but Woolston would persuade himself, that he disclaimed ridicule (see opening of Letter 6th.) or that he was only deriding abuses and misrepresentations of Scripture, and such persons as made misrepresentations wilfully for gain.—Do we not find the Socinians, in like manner, speaking lightly about the *Trinity*? The truth seems to be, that, besides his having been incensed, like a baited animal, he was under a degree of Insanity:—at one time, after he ceased to be Fellow, perhaps about 1721, he was actually under confinement as insane; but before his Fellowship was declared vacant, he shewed some marks of a disordered mind; it is said, by some Biographers\*, that he was deprived of his Fellowship for Blasphemy, but he really lost it only by non-residence: when he first exceeded the time then allowed for absence, he was continued in his fellowship from a principle of compassion; but, when he heard that such a motive was assigned, he came to College to declare he was perfectly well; proving, by his manner, the contrary. Not long after, being called to residence, he refused to come, and then his Fellowship was vacated. This History seems to clear up all difficulties arising from the wildness of the notion he maintained.

As to the *truth* of his Allegorical Hypothesis, little need be said †.—It is quite groundless. There may

\* See Ladvocat's Dict. and those he took his short account from.

† Something of this notion seems to be encouraged by the  
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may be something in the New Testament which may seem *like* it. Our Saviour has moralized\* upon a miracle of his own: several actions are mentioned in Scripture, which are intended to mean something, to be a kind of visible language; some of the Christian Fathers drew mystical meanings from every fact, natural as well as supernatural; but they never moralized or spiritualized a *miracle*, that I know of, without presupposing its literal meaning. Of *Origen* this is evident, from his controversy† with *Celsus* ‡.

As to the most formidable parts of Woolston's works, his incidental (for so I am inclined to call them) cavils at the Miracles of Christ, they may have encouraged and assisted Infidels, but I should doubt whether they have done harm upon the whole: they are often contemptible; and, if one takes those which are the least so, when one estimates the good arising from the§ answers to them, it is not easy to pronounce, that they have been an evil. Those against the *Resurrection* of Christ, which

followers of Baron *Swedenborg*. See *Dialogues* about his works, p. 34. The Baron had seen Heaven, &c.—was this *credible* with *miracles*? to be sure it was; Miracles were not wrought chiefly for *confirming*; they were to *declare* hidden truths.

\* John vi. 27. but see Macknight, p. 344. Some say the story of the *good Samaritan* is founded on fact. (Dr. Jortin.)—One might read Bp. *Hurd's* Discourse on Christ's driving buyers and sellers out of the Temple.

† See Bp. Gibson's first pastoral Letter.

‡ Some Christians, in the time of *Origen*, or sooner, must have allegorized the miraculous *cures*, much as Woolston did; (see before the quotation from Lardner's account of *Origen*, Works, Vol. 2. p. 535.) but I speak only of such Fathers, as have had works descend to us; and of such as I have happened to see.

§ Lardner's Discourses on the revival of *Lazarus*, &c. are useful *beyond* obviating the cavils of Woolston.—For other answers see Leland's view.

which are perhaps the most forcible of all, will be considered\* hereafter.

I am not ashamed to conclude with owning, that I feel more compassion, when I think of Woolston, than indignation; in his last works, he approached near to infidelity; but he always fancied he was refining the Christian system; his notions were a disorder in his intellects. He was a man of Learning and Probity; nay, of wit and humour, however misapplied. It would have reflected more honour upon our Religion, and upon our civil Government, to have committed him to the care of his relations and friends (for friends he had to the last, of the greatest eminence† in the Church), than to let him support himself in prison by the sale of his writings, and end his days in confinement.

8. Mr. Hume has briefly touched upon the *Miracles of the Old Testament*; at least upon those mentioned in the *Pentateuch*; our plan is, to leave the credibility of the Old Testament to be supported by the New: yet, as he *challenges* us to lay our hand upon *our heart*, and declare, whether we think the *Pentateuch* credible, it may be proper not wholly to pass over the subject, though we must leave it to others to do justice to it.—

i. *In general*, things so very *remote* from our customs and observations and habits of thinking, as those related in the *Pentateuch*, will be most favourably received by those who think *very little*, and by those who think *very much*; an *intermediate* degree of reflexion will make them seem *strange*, and yet not enable us to divest ourselves sufficiently of our habitual prejudices to make proper allowances for them.

ii. The

\* Art. 4. of Church of England.

† Dr. Sam. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, Archbp. Wake.



ii. The *natural Philosophy*\* of the Pentateuch ought not to induce us to reject it. It is not at all likely, that God, in order to enable a man to be a *Lawgiver* of the Jews, should reveal to him all the causes of the Phænomena of Nature: should make him supersede the studies of Newton, and anticipate the discoveries of Herschel;—nay, a man must know ten thousand times more than either of these to be liable to no mistakes in Philosophy; to know *all* the powers of nature; or all that in after times may be discovered by *Man*. And if Moses could not know *all*, how can any one object to a little more, or a little less? A man might govern the Jews, that had the Ideas of the Planetary System contained in the first chapter of Genesis; I do not recollect, that there is any thing in it contrary to modern discoveries; if not, that may be worth remembering; the account seems to me in a great degree intended to establish the *Sabbath*: which was what *Moses* would want; and what *we* still want.—But why, you will say, did Moses give this as an *authentic* account of the Creation? Suppose I answer, *I do not know?* it seems to me as if that would be no sufficient reason for *rejecting* our whole *System of religious Dispensations*†.—Suppose I answer, Moses might be an inspired writer as a *Religious Minister*, and be left to his own notions, or to notions *established* in his time, as a *natural Philosopher* ‡; and yet he always might write and speak in

\* Some Christians once reckoned it heretical to call *Stars* by any names not mentioned in Scripture, (see Lardner's *Heresies*, Book i. sect. 5.); Augustin seems to have been ashamed of this Heresy: query, is there not all the folly of it in insisting on the Pentateuch containing perfect natural Philosophy?

† In the *Monthly Review* for April, 1792, p. 432, there is a quotation from a Pamphlet, or Book, which might be worth considering in this place:—It is Belsham's *Essays*, vol. 2.

‡ The Pentateuch might be a *sacred Book*, even suppose Moses

in those different characters, in one and the same tone and stile? even that would be sufficient to hinder our *rejecting* the Pentateuch. I verily believe St. Paul would have done so: (for we have a clearer Idea\* of the inspiration of St. Paul than of Moses,) and yet no false Astronomy would weaken my faith in St. Paul.—“one *star* differeth from another star in *Glory*,” makes no difference between fixed star and *Planet*: why should not St. Paul be as good an Astronomer as Moses?

iii. It will be thought more likely, that God should *reveal morality* than natural philosophy; and yet it does not seem clear, that he even revealed morality, strictly speaking, in either Old or *New*† Testament; though they both, in many ways, *tend to improve* morality; and both give (*incidentally* as it were) *examples* of higher morality than could be invented by the sacred writers. I have already said, that no one could invent such sentiments as our Saviour uttered in the last‡ Scenes of his Life; but yet some Duties seem to be left in the New Testament according to the *established* morality of the times;—in like manner, the *established morality*  
*in*

to have written only what happened in his *own time*, *prefixing* what he received from *Tradition*: the facts conveyed down by Tradition would be the more *evident*, the more nearly they were connected with his people.—That Moses was the Author of the Pentateuch, was proved Dec. 2d, 1792, by Mr. Marsh of St. John's Coll. (Cambr.) in a Sermon preached before the University, and since printed.—Conceive Moses 1500 years before Christ, or 2500 after the Creation, giving an account of the Creation; he could not speak as a *Witness*; no one, *in his own time*, would *understand* him to be doing more than giving the notions of the best informed as held at that time. *Universal inspiration* is a very *improbable* thing. Inspiration must be for some particular *purpose*.

\* Powell 15th Discourse. Chap. xii. Sect. 3. of this.

† There is something to this purpose on Art. 6. of the Church of England, Sect. 5.

‡ Chap. xiii. Sect. 11.



*in the Pentateuch* may be what we should now call imperfect, and yet the simplicity of the Book of Genesis, and some fine strokes of moral painting contained in it, may afford a strong presumption in favour of its authenticity.

iv. The account of the *Fall*, to which Mr. Hume refers, is very short \* ; *too short* to furnish an *insuperable* objection to a *system* of dispensations : besides, suppose we did not understand it, is it necessary that we should ? Nevertheless, I own I see nothing contrary to either reason or Scripture, in considering it as an history of an human being, at first ignorant † of his own powers, and therefore under the immediate guidance of God ; afterwards desirous of conducting himself, and, in learning how to conduct himself, getting into various sorts of evil, natural and moral : allowing his passions to acquire too much strength ; and acquiring bad habits, of which his descendants would, of course, according to the laws and constitution of human nature, feel some hurtful effects. The story of the *Prodigal Son* is never reckoned unnatural ; and he did much the same that Adam, the first human “ Son ‡ of God,” did ; only the account does not extend to the *children* of the prodigal Son : and the reconciliation of Adam to his heavenly Parent, followed after a greater interval.

v. Mr. Hume mentions the *Deluge*. The appearances of fossil shells and fishes he could not be a stranger to ; he might incline to some other solution of them : there have been many *theories of the Earth*, but I am told, that the most rational and ingenious

\* Dr. Balguy, p. 200.

† ABp. King's Sermon.—My Poem on Redemption.—These Lectures on Art. 9.

‡ Luke iii. 38.

ingenious of the modern ones, defend the *Mosaic* History, and very ably\*.

vi. There is something wrong, it seems, in "the arbitrary *choice of one People* as the *favourites* of Heaven." Mr. Hume must call the selection and separation of the Jews *arbitrary* if he pleases; but, put yourself in the place of an inhabitant of the world at the time of their separation, and say what expedient *could* be used for the purpose of recovering men from their idolatry, but that which *was* used? namely, reserving *one people* to profess the unity and spirituality of the Supreme Being.—You may call this people *favourites* of Heaven, if you please, but the purpose in separating them, was, as far as we can conceive, the general *good of all Mankind*. Not that God's giving a superior degree of Happiness to any one *Nation*, or to any one *World*, is inconsistent with either his Justice, or his Goodness; any more than his giving more understanding or more health; but Mr. Hume's *meaning* is, that the Jews were *not really* separated by *Heaven*. If ever any thing *proved itself*, it is this divine appointment: who, I beseech you, could possibly separate them, but the Governor of the world? consider the barbarism of the times, consider the strong sensual *enticements* to Idolatry, consider the difficulty of any one's despising all religions around him, consider the want of all inducements to do it, not forgetting, that the worship of the *One Spiritual* God reached down to the very *lowest* of the Jewish *People*; and you must acknowledge, that no cause can be assigned for the separation of the Jews, which has the least shew of probability, but the  
immediate

\* I conceive this to be the case with "Lettres physiques et morales sur l'Histoire de la Terre et de l'Homme, par J. A. De Luc"



immediate *command of God*.—One might as soon expect a man struck with a palsy to raise himself, (take up his bed and walk,) as a people stupified with Idolatry. Consider farther to what this separation has *tended*, how it has fallen in with the *natural improvements* of men, how it has *prepared* the world for an universal religion, pure, rational, and spiritual; and you will be fixed and settled in your conclusion.

vii. But though I say, that the mere separation of the Jews proves itself to be Divine, I do not mean to deny, that strong *marks of a power* superior to that of man must be requisite to *effect* the separation. Miracles were absolutely necessary, and those very *striking* and awful, and such as would strike a *number of people* at the same time. Yet to these also Mr. *Hume objects*:—as one discrediting circumstance, he mentions the deliverance of the Jews “from Bondage by prodigies the most astonishing imaginable.”—One does not see how any man could have influence enough to institute the Jewish polity, without miracles of an astonishing nature; but Mr. Hume *seems* to entertain one wrong idea, which may be less obvious; he seems to think, that *we* are to offer the same proofs of the credibility of the Jewish miracles, as if they had been wrought for *our* conviction: whereas, miracles are to be suited to those, for whose conviction they are intended; and, when their end is answered, the *circumstantial* proofs of their credibility must decay; and may safely:—posterity has other proofs; proofs from the effects of the miracles; and from *Prophecy*: Prophecy affords a proof irresistible to those, who live long after the promulgation of the Religion in question, though it be less useful to those, to whom it is immediately proposed.

viii. Lastly,

viii. Lastly, Mr. Hume seems to think the *number* as well as the grandeur of miracles recorded in the Pentateuch a suspicious circumstance. He finds the Book “*full of prodigies and miracles.*” —But any one, who reflects upon the nature of the Jewish Government, must see, that it could not be carried on without miracles. “Miracles, says \* Bishop Hallifax, were absolutely requisite, to execute the temporal rewards and punishments annexed to the Law.” —Besides, the reason, which we have assigned for miracles in the beginning of the Jewish Polity, extends to the continuation of it; without them, it is not conceivable how the Jews could have been kept from relapsing into Idolatry.—But a number of difficulties wholly *unanswerable*, could never weigh with me against the separation of the Israelites, the Government and History of the Jews. I call this Separation, as it has been continued, the strongest, the most undeniable “*concurring Testimony.*” Mr. Hume says, the History of the Pentateuch is “corroborated by no concurring Testimony.”

9. If we now return to *our plan*, the next thing which occurs, is the Question, whether, *supposing the reality* of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, they really *prove* what they are thought to prove; namely, the purpose of God to instruct mankind by those who perform them? or, as it was put before †, because a man can do what I cannot, or even something beyond the powers of nature, am I therefore to comply with him, in every thing he orders, as if his directions were really Divine? This is a question, which had “been slightly passed over,”

\* Serm. i. p. 9.

† This must mean, supposing not only that Bartimæus really recovered his sight, but that he recovered it supernaturally.

‡ Introduction to Chap. xii.



over," till Dr. *Powell* proposed and solved it in his 7th Discourse.—I shall endeavour to give the substance of what he says, departing freely from his expressions, as a Sermon does not admit the humbler stile of a Lecture, and because two different modes of expressing the same thing may illustrate one another.

i. When we find men entrusted with an extraordinary *power*, we cannot but think it *likely*, that they have also extraordinary *knowledge*, especially concerning the design and the *use* of that power.—When any messenger brings a verbal message from a King, if he shews a *signet*, which he could only get from the Monarch, we must think we have sufficient reason for listening to his *Message*, as expressing the real will of his Lord.—Or, more popularly; Does God really send us a *message* by those who work miracles? if they say so, he most probably does: they must *know*, and they bring very good *credentials*.

ii. As *legal* evidence may be called evidence, which it is the *intention* of the Lawgiver that we should receive\*; so *natural* evidence must be such as is sufficient, according to the intention of the author of Nature: the only difficulty is, what evidence may be deemed natural:—now, to reasonable minds, violations of the Laws of nature declare the interposition of God, naturally, or by the constitution of their Nature; therefore, it is the *intention* of God, that they should do so: or, when miracles are performed, it is the intention of God, that we should consider him, who performs them, as empowered to instruct us.—Or, more popularly; It is *natural* to us to think, that those speak to us from God, who work miracles:—and who made it natural? God: therefore, God does mean us to think so, when he works miracles.

iii. If

\* As for instance, the evidence of three witnesses to a Will devising Lands, &c. such evidence is not *infallible*, but it is to be deemed *sufficient*; such is the *intention* of the Legislator.

iii. If the Christian miracles were not intended to reveal the will of God, they would all have answered some *other* important purpose; it does not appear that they did:—Though they often shewed marks of Christian Benevolence, and were never flighty, nor revengeful, yet some of them caused *no* increase of *happiness* whatever \*. This seems unaccountable, except we suppose them meant to prove, that Jesus was a true Prophet; and, if we admit that supposition, all seems reasonable and consistent.

iv. A real miracle is an *action* of God; not merely a *permission*: his actions must have the *effects* intended; and those effects, when no abuse takes place, will be *good*. Therefore, if we know the good effects of any miracles, we can from them trace out the *Intention*. The good effects of the Christian miracles were to convert men to Christianity; therefore, the intention of miracles was to convert men to Christianity. And he who performed them was *sent* by God. This argument cannot have place, till some effects of miracles have been experienced.

(Not that we seem more assured in this reasoning, than we are in that about any other *final cause*; as the final cause of the *Dew* or *Frost*, or any of the parts of the human Body.—A miracle may possibly, for any thing we know, fail in its effect, at least in some instances; yet our opinion, as to the final cause of miracles, may be well-founded).

v. The last remark, (which we are now about to make) will seem perhaps less obscure than any of the foregoing. Suppose any one to say he *will* perform a Miracle with a particular design, or in proof of a particular assertion; he performs it; then that miracle proves, that such person is commissioned by God, and that his assertion is true—Nay, in such a case, *God himself* speaks. For, would God, after such

\* Fig-tree—darkness—walking on the water.



such a declaration, give power from above, if the assertion were false? that would be inconsistent with his veracity.—“The God that answereth by Fire,” said Elijah to the Prophets of Baal, “let him \* be God;”—*Jehovah* answered by Fire, and thereby declared, as strongly as by *words*, that Elijah acted by his commission.—Jesus gave the friends † of *Lazarus* to understand, that he would raise *Lazarus* from the dead, in *order* to shew them, that he was sent from Heaven. The divine Power did immediately perform what Jesus had engaged for; and thereby confirmed his mission as strongly as by a *voice* from Heaven.—This case differs from the first. If, *at sea*, an Officer came from one Admiral to another, to negotiate some affair, and said, ‘to shew that I come not of myself, whenever I make my signal, my Admiral will furl his main-sail,’ and so it proved; that would only be the testimony mentioned in the *first* of these remarks; we depend finally on the interpretation of the *Officer*.—But if the Admiral who sent, *heard* what was said, and *then* furled his mainsail, if he did not abide by what his messenger had in his hearing engaged for, *he* would be guilty of direct *falsehood*. And, to reject a miracle of the kind now under consideration, would be to make “*God a Liar*,” according to the expression ‡ of St. John. Falsehood is deceiving by the use of *Signs*; and though words are the most usual signs of our ideas, they are but arbitrary signs; visible signs are by no means uncommon.—

*So far* I take the substance of what I say from Dr. *Powell*: If it should occur, that we treated § before of the *abuse* of the Gift of *Tongues*, it may perhaps be asked, why may not any person, who is possessed of any other miraculous power, be conceived

\* 1 Kings xviii. 24.

† 1 John v. 10.

‡ John xi. 42.

§ Chap. xii. Sect. 3.

ceived to *abuse* it?—because the gift of tongues seems to have been a miraculous communication of a *faculty*, to be managed like any other faculty; and therefore liable to abuse; to changes of *humour*, attacks of temptation, fallies of passion, &c. but every supernatural *cure*, every *raising* of an human being from a state of death, seems as if it should be considered as arising from a *separate* communication of divine Power\*. If this be the right notion of the thing, it is very improbable, that the Deity should supply such power, when it would not only answer *no* end, as in the case of Languages spoken from ostentation, but *defeat* its own ends.—In the *last-mentioned* kind of miracles, in those mentioned in the 5th Observation, the difficulty proposed is out of the Question; the *Veracity* of the Supreme Being himself is immediately concerned.

10. In the *preceding chapter*, when we were speaking of the credibility of miracles in *general*, we took *some* notice of the means of *discerning* true † miracles from *false*: this subject should be resumed now that we are speaking of the Gospel-miracles in particular: Partly, because there are some texts of Scripture, which seem to imply, that miracles may possibly deceive; partly, because what was said before, was short and general; and not so useful as it might be made by the mention of some few examples.

#### Texts

\* At least this account here is *consistent* with the former; for there, from the *abuse* of the Gift of tongues, we concluded, that God could not give that gift *occasionally*.—A re-iterated communication of supernatural power, seems to answer wise purposes in what we commonly call *miracles*. Though it may be less conceivable in what is called *Inspiration*; either of *words* or *things*; either of *Languages*, or the *Scheme* of the Christian Redemption.

† False Miracles are called in 2 Thes. ii. 9. “*lying wonders*.”



Texts of Scripture which seem to imply, that mere miracles, or what we dare not absolutely deny to be real, may possibly deceive, are such as the following:—\*“ If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”—† “ There shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders.”—“ Though we,” (says St. Paul) “ or ‡ an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which *we* have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”—St. Paul also says, of § “ that Wicked” who shall “ be revealed” (ὁ ἀνομος) that his “ coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders||.”—We cannot read such texts as these, and think ourselves at liberty to neglect criteria of true and false miracles; it must be wrong not to prepare ourselves for a Duty, to which we are plainly informed, that we shall (or may) be called.

With regard to *instances* of miracles, exemplifying the general remarks in the last Chapter, many might be enumerated, far beyond our limits; it would carry us into great length of discussion, to consider all the *circumstances*, even of those few miracles mentioned by Mr. Hume †:—we will only  
*select*

† Deut. xiii. 1—3. † Matt. xxiv. 24. † Gal. i. 8.

§ 2 Theff. ii. 9. 11. σημειον is distinguished from τερας—See Parkhurst's Lex. τερας, or Mintert's, as before.

|| See Bp. Hallifax on Prophecy, p. 2.

† Here Mr. Hume's account of Vespasian's Miracles, and those at the Tomb of the Abbé Paris should be read.

*select* such examples as seem requisite to elucidate the general observations made in the last section of the preceding Chapter.

In considering doubtful miracles, we must keep two things in our mind; their *Nature* and their *Purpose*. Under their *Nature*, I comprehend the *Occasion* on which they were wrought, as well as the *manner*\* and *matter* of them: confining the notion of *purpose*, to the religious and moral systems which they were intended to support.

To form a *complete system* of criteria of true and false miracles, is impracticable. The regular way of forming one would be, to read, with very nice attention†, all the accounts of miracles, which are to be found, and mark, with the utmost minuteness, all their distinguishing properties; then class them, &c. If it should be allowed, that there is a degree of human sagacity capable of accomplishing this, yet, when these criteria were known, the next forgers of miracles would be aware of them, and would furnish their signs and wonders with as many as possible of the newly discovered marks of credibility.

Nevertheless, from the *occasion*, the *manner*, and the *matter* of doubtful and suspicious miracles, we may, in many cases, form a judgment; and perhaps we need seldom be in any great perplexity about the *conduct* which we shall pursue.

If the *occasion* of any doubtful miracle is *trifling*‡ and frivolous, we shall hesitate much to accept it.

A

\* Sect. I. 15. 22.

† Bacon, as quoted by Hume, at the end of his Essay, seems to say something like this. “Facienda est congeries omnium monstrorum, &c.

‡ Several of the *Scripture*-miracles are performed on occasions which may be called trifling, taken *separately*; but they should all be conceived as *jointly* performed on *one single occasion*; to prove Jesus to be the Messiah.



A miracle is no *Trifle*. Many trifling occasions are so plainly such, as to want no pointing out: others may have some appearance of bustle and importance, when they really are of very little moment.—It may justly be thought a trifling occasion, when men contend about things they do not understand, however vehement they may be. Words without ideas seem as if they could never furnish a motive to infinite wisdom for unsettling the Laws of Nature.—And, as regularity in the operations of nature seems intended to guide us in our ordinary undertakings, it is improbable that the Laws of nature should ever be violated in the ordinary course of things: or when such violations are needless.—The Jesuits and Jansenists differed about questions above the decision of the human understanding\*, and the Miracles, said to be performed at the Tomb of the† *Abbé Paris*, were performed in support of the Jansenist side of those questions.

We cannot conceive *Vespasian's* being Emperor, any very *important* matter in the sight of Heaven.

When miracles are said to be performed in support of a Religion that is established, they are the less credible on that account. The *Mahometan* Religion does not appear to have made any *public* pretensions to miracles *before* it was established, except perhaps communication of the Prophet with the Deity, which is a miracle that wants other miracles to prove it; whereas the Christian Religion unquestionably did; and I think Bishop Butler has shewn‡, that, in the proper sense of the expressions, this was *peculiar* to Christianity; (including the

\* See Book iv. of this; Art. x. Sect. 17.

† Should it be *Abbé Paris*, or *Abbé de Paris*? Hume, a very good Frenchman, quotes in French, *Abbé Paris*, p. 139. 8vo. —but Leland uses *Abbé de Paris*, seemingly from the French also: from the very same title; *Recueil des Miracles*, &c.

‡ See Bp. Butler's *Analogy*, Part ii. Chap. 7.

the *Mosaic* religion, by which it was introduced.) The first publishers of the Christian Religion performed miracles before it acquired any strength or influence; or had any witnesses who could be partial: when men could not concert them, and were least likely to accept them.

When miracles are said to be performed in support of any powerful *party*, or set of men, they are evidently the less credible on that account; because power can procure false testimony, and a party or set of men can furnish numbers, who can play into each others hands. The *Abbé Paris* was favoured by a powerful party, and every miracle supposed to be performed at his tomb, was immediately applied as a strong argument in support of that party.—This principle discredits the miracle said to have been performed by \* *Vespasian*; he could want no proofs, that he chose to call for.—What is said of parties, is particularly applicable to rival and contending parties: if they are equal in power, they strain every nerve for victory.—And indeed this principle reaches all miracles, which appear to be performed with worldly views.

Sometimes we may form a judgment of miracles from the *manner*, in which they are performed, or related. If miracles are a long *time* in performing, it affords room to suspect, that they are brought about by human means. Several of the cures at the tomb of the *Abbé Paris* were slow, gradual, and attended with excessive pain†: whereas our Saviour's miracles might be called instantaneous.—St. Januarius's blood is not liquefied all at once‡; it takes up between eight, and twenty minutes.

Though

\* Suetonius, *Vesp.* Cap. 7.—Tacitus. 5. 8—Bullet, by Salisbury, p. 251.—Lardner Test.—Hume on Miracles.

† Leland 1. p. 327. 5th edit.

‡ See any travels to Naples.



Though some witnesses of miracles are necessary to their credibility, yet *crowds* are suspicious.—There were generally crowds present at the Tomb of the *Abbé Paris*. And St. *Januarius's* blood is always liquefied in the midst of a large multitude. When our Lord cured the Deaf man (Mark. vii. 33.) it is particularly said, he took him “aside from the multitude;” and yet there were *some witnesses*, for we find “*he charged them,*” not to publish his Fame—How different from the conduct of Lucian's Alexander!

*Some judgment* may be formed from *Scenery*; and those that have possession of it; sometimes, if that be *changed*, the miraculous power ceases. The *Cock-lane Ghost* could only knock and scratch in one place. When the gates of the Church-Yard were shut up, at Paris, the Abbé occasioned no more miracles: some indeed have excepted convulsions, but, as thirty Jansenist Divines\* have rejected them, we may reject them safely.

We may here mark the difference between a *single* miracle, and a set or *system* all adapted, in an orderly manner, to one important *end*.—No single miracle seems wholly credible of itself. We cannot conceive any reason for exerting miraculous power, which would not occasion a number of miracles. This again affects *Vespasian's* cure; and so it must, though he were said to have performed another.—The *Christian* miracles were very *numerous*.—From this consideration it follows, that, if we meet with a relation of *a miracle*, with circumstances which we *cannot account for*, we are not to be alarmed, nor to think that a proof of its credibility.

Our judgment may moreover be assisted by the manner in which miracles are *related*. Accounts nicely studied and arranged are suspicious, because  
they

\* Leland i. p. 328.

they shew a consciousness of some weakness, which requires circumspection; some guarding against discoveries: and a pompous stile shews, that the relator distrusts his matter.—The relations of the New Testament are remarkably artless and unguarded; the consequence of which is some cavilling from enemies; but I should hope great credit from the candid and judicious.—Though we could not solve any certain difficulty, in a relation of a Gospel-miracle, yet, if we see it is clearly one, which an artful contriver of a story would not have left, that is enough to shew, that the relation is *not* artfully contrived; which is the main thing we want to be convinced of.—Thus errors in manuscripts are sometimes recommendations; (Chap. viii. Sect. 6.) the reason is the same; *voluntary* falsifications are more to be feared, than involuntary; and if we can be secure against the former, we can put up with the latter, especially when the latter is the foundation of our security.

Under this head we may rank the character of the *Persons*, who give the relation; if they have been found encouragers of pious frauds, their accounts will deserve but little attention — If they are very remote, their credit is the worse; as analogy of all kinds is weakened by distance\*, in any sense of the word.

But the principal thing to consider, with regard to relators (whose veracity we have no particular reason to suspect), is, whether they are what one may call *versed* in miracles, whether they know all the criteria fixed upon before their own times. The relators of the first *Christian* miracles seem not to have had any notion of such a thing: any more than an ingenuous man has of the external marks of internal emotions, or one naturally eloquent, of the rules

\* Powell, p. 95.



rules of *Rhetoric*.—Whereas those, who presided at the Tomb of the *Abbé Paris*, understood perfectly all the criteria, which had ever been remarked, and could provide accordingly.

We may, lastly, form some judgment of the credibility of particular miracles, from what may be called the *matter* of them. If the changes they make are in laws of nature, which are *little known*, they are suspicious:—and so, if they are like *former* false miracles; if they have a *sameness* amongst themselves, being all *cures* for instance of one sort of distemper, or of distempers nearly allied, there is room to suspect, that they are all only *one trick*, with some variations.—Marks of *benevolence* must be some recommendation of miracles, because those who *invent*, wish often to *avenge* their Gods or themselves of their enemies: Christ “went about doing \* good” miraculously; though the whole *system* of Christian miracles seems to have been intended to *convince* men, that he was sent from God.

We may add here, as we did when we spoke† of the criteria of miracles *in general*, that, *after all*, there may be some cases, of which we must form a judgment, in a manner which we cannot describe, by means of our *feelings* and *common sense*; though we must not rest in these, when it can be avoided:—Of such it is not easy to give instances.

II. Having considered the marks of true and false miracles, which may be found in their *Nature*, we now come to take some notice of their *Purpose*; the Purpose of true miracles is, to promote true *Religion* and improved *Morality*.

If doubtful miracles tend to promote *rational religion* and *pure morals*, that will add greatly to their credibility; but if they are performed in order to support

\* Acts x. 38.

† i. 15. 22.

support *idolatry*, very gross *superstition*, *enthusiasm*, *fanaticism*, or *bad morals*, no external testimony can make them perfectly credible\*.

It may probably be thought, that this remark is too *bold*; and unfriendly to *Revelation*; and therefore that the *Scriptures* cannot encourage this Opinion; it is then our business to shew that they do.—Indeed this may appear in some degree from the texts *already* † quoted: but it will more fully appear from the following considerations.

Our Lord distinguishes between the Spirit of Elias and the Spirit of the Gospel, in the exertion of the same miraculous ‡ *power*. Elias had called for *fire* from Heaven to consume those who attacked him; the Disciples of Christ proposed to him to do the same thing, to punish the Samaritans for their inhospitable treatment.—“But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of,” that is, ‘such a miracle would be as much a miracle as any other, but it would not arise from, and therefore it would not promote, Christian *Virtue*: It would be an instance of *Power*, but it would prove nothing in my favour by its *tendency*.’

When the Jews§ want to apply the above-mentioned text, (Deut. xiii. 1—3.) to Christ, and say, that his power is not of an *heavenly sort*; though they require a *sign*, he grants them none; he shews them no farther instance of *power*, but only points out to them the general good tendency of his miracles,

\* Leland rightly gives (Vol. 1. p. 356) the additional accounts, which he had received, of the fanatical *austerities* of the *Abbé Paris*, judging, that gross errors in Religion could not but discredit the miracles said to have been performed at his Tomb.

† In the preceding Section. Deut. xiii. 1—3. and others,

‡ Luke ix. 55.—2 Kings i. 10. 12.

§ Luke xi. 15, 16. See Macknight, p. 368.



miracles, or rather refers them to it (as a thing well known) *tacitly*; which must prove, that his power could not be *diabolical*; and, as he taught no false religion, that Text (Deut. xiii. 1—3.) could not be applicable to *him*.

Christ, as was lately \* observed, sometimes points out the moral tendency of his own miracles by *moralizing* upon them; during the performance also of his miracles, he had often *looks and gestures* of a moral nature, and † shewed, by prayer, by sighs, and tears, how much he had the true *happiness* of Mankind at Heart: which, he knew well, must depend upon Religion and Virtue.

Though doing *many* miracles was a characteristic of the *Messiah*, yet he is not described by *mere power*; the *application* of his power is always particularly insisted on. The spectators of his Miracle exclaim, “He hath done all things ‡ well.”—“God anointed (says St. Peter) Jesus of Nazareth § with the *Holy Ghost* and with *Power*, who went about *doing good*, and healing all that were oppressed of the *Devil*: for God was with him.”—“The spirit of the Lord is upon me (reads our Saviour ||, out of the Prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah) because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”—Men were to judge, then, whether Jesus was the *Messiah*, not only by his *power* in performing miracles, but by their *tendency*.—And we may safely adopt the words of a learned Prelate. “Neither Doctrines alone, nor miracles alone, are a sufficient

\* Sect. 7. † See Mark vii. 34. John xi. 33, 35, 38.  
‡ Mark vii. 37. § Acts x. 38.  
|| Luke iv. 18. If. lxi. 1.

sufficient testimony\* that the Revelation containing them is divine;" though their united testimony is sufficiently convincing.

12. We may affirm, on this ground, that *the evidence of the Gospel miracles is sufficient* to answer all the purposes, which it can be supposed they were intended to answer.—As was observed before of the evidence for Christianity in general, it is but *probable* evidence:—1. Our *senses* may *possibly* deceive us;—2. *Testimony* can only be probable.—3. Supposing a *fact* ascertained, we may not *know* certainly whether it is *natural* or *supernatural*.—4. Supposing it supernatural, yet scepticism may still question, whether it expresses the *intention of God*.—But, though our evidence is only *probable* evidence, yet it is *sufficiently strong*. Our expectations of Life and Death, of day and night, summer and winter, are founded only on probability, yet we act upon them as on knowledge or certainty: and, if the evidence of miracles does but influence our lives and actions, it will do all that it needs to do. No higher degree of evidence, were it within the nature of the thing, could leave us in a state of *probation*.—Bishop Butler, in his † Analogy, speaks more particularly on this utility of probable evidence, and with his usual good sense.—He also says ‡, “Nor does there appear any absurdity in supposing, that the speculative difficulties, in which the evidence of Religion is involved, may make even the principal part of some persons trial.”—Which agrees with Deut. xiii. 3. quoted before; “For the Lord your God *proveth* you, to know whether

\* Bp. Hallifax, p. 2. He goes on, after these words, to say the same thing more fully.

† Butler's Anal. Part 3. Chap. 8. 4thly.

‡ Part 2. Chap. 6. 3dly.



whether ye love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul."

13. It seems to follow, from what has been said, that the evidence of miracles, even though supposed to be performed in or near our own times, *gradually grows weaker* and weaker, and at last must be *too weak to convince* any reasonable person: for whatever marks can be put upon true miracles, may be *forged* in such a degree as to occasion great *doubt*: and the less *occasion* there seems for them, the less effect will any given strength of evidence have. As there seems great reason to conclude, that the *Christian Dispensation* is not to be succeeded by *any other*, for it is *universal*, and admits the greatest *improvements* in all mankind, that we have any conception of; it appears probable, that the *miracles* intended to establish the Christian Religion, will be the *last* credible miracles performed in the world. —Grotius, on Mark xvi. 17, says, that if a man was to go teach the Gospel to barbarous nations, he would still have the supernatural powers mentioned in that verse; but this seems *rash*; the *first propagation of the Gospel* was very different from the *spreading* of it at present\*: Besides, we cannot, on any occasion, point out the expedients of divine Government *beforehand*, though we may admire them when they are past.

It is not necessary for us, just at present, to enter into *disputes* about the *duration* of miraculous powers in the Christian Church. All that we have said only implies, that Christian miracles were intended to *establish* Christianity; whether they continued a longer or a shorter time.—Bishop Warburton has published

\* Grotius rather seems to *speak* with a reference to the power of casting out *Demons*, than to that of speaking with *New Tongues*;—though I do not see why he might not *mean* to include these also.

published a very ingenious defence of the miraculous fiery eruption, when *Julian* attempted (or was supposed to attempt) to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem; I once \* explained my reasons why I was not satisfied with it; and I since find that *Lardner* †, who saw much farther into the subject than I did, came to the same conclusion. I mention this miracle as one, about which learned men have held different opinions. Another instance is, the miracle of the thundering ‡ Legion. Another, the Conversion of Constantine the Great §.

14. I know not that I can now make any more remarks on the subject of miracles, without being too particular for the nature of our undertaking; I could only wish to look once more through Mr. *Hume's* Essay, and apply what has been said, in the order of his observations: inserting any thing that may appear to have been improperly omitted.

Mr. *Hume* opens his Essay on Miracles, with an argument of Archbishop *Tillotson*, which seems neither || conclusive, nor applicable.—He estimates the comparative forces of Analogy and Testimony falsely, in several respects; ascribing too much force to Analogy, and too little to Testimony.—He defends the *Indian Prince*, and says he reasoned justly, though he says, that Indians “cannot reasonably be positive” about what happens in Muscovy.—He builds

\* In some Lectures on ecclesiastical History, read in Sidney College Chapel in the years 1768 and 1769.

† *Lardner's Works*, Vol. viii. p. 393. — and Vol. x. p. 83. read the passage in Vol. x first,

‡ Bullet transl. by Salisbury, p. 47, and Note.

§ See *Lardner's Works*, Vol. iv. p. 151, 152.

|| The 28th Art. of the Church of England takes better ground. Transubstantiation, it says, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, nay, is repugnant to it, &c.—if all else was right, our senses would not give us just reason for rejecting the Doctrine.—And the evidence of *Miracles* does not overthrow that of our senses.



builds upon a distinction between *extraordinary* and *miraculous*, which does not affect our reasoning. He speaks of a *Law of Nature*, as of something known to be fixed.—He says, that there must be “an uniform experience against a Miracle,” in order to make it one; whereas experience tells us, that extraordinary *measures* are always used on extraordinary *occasions*: And the experience of which he speaks, is only in *one track*, and the expectation founded on it liable to be weakened or *destroyed* by change of *circumstances*;—God’s giving the teachers of a *new Religion* power to alter the course of Nature, would not lessen our ordinary *confidence* in it.—So that if a man said “that he *saw a dead man restored to Life*,” and that was the *whole* of the matter, I should disbelieve it; my habitual expectations should guide me in *ordinary* cases; but, if the resurrection of a dead person seemed a rational proof of any thing *extraordinary* and *important*, and part of a *System* of Miracles, the case would be changed, I should be quite in a *new situation*, and it would be childish and absurd for me to adhere to that experience, which had before been my best guide.—If, indeed, this rising of a dead man was a *single event*, I should give it but little credit.

So much of what *might be*; with regard to what *has been*, it seems to me, that a testimony, which has never been known to deceive, ought to convince; especially when joined with an important *occasion*. And such testimony we have, in favour of Christian miracles.—Men certainly love the *marvellous*, but our witnesses were very *sober-minded*.—*Ignorant* people may be easily imposed upon, but the Jews were the least ignorant, as to religion, of any people in the world.—Miracles *for* one religion, are miracles *against* another, it seems; but I have heard two witnesses swear point-blank against each other;

other; and yet nobody thought *both* of them perjured.—*Vespasian's* miracles seem incredible, because he had dependents and *flatterers*, and was inclined to superstition; besides, he did so *little*, and in cases so *unimportant*!—The effects of *credulity* and *pious fraud*, separate and conjoined, are certainly *lamentable*;—the *door-keeper* of Saragossa Cathedral, the Niece of *Pascal*, and the *Tomb* of the *Abbé Paris*, are melancholy instances. But the occasions were *trifling*; the *parties* *powerful*, interested, enthusiastic, and well skilled in the *Criteria* of Miracles, and marks of Credibility.—This last shews how “the Jansenist miracles” might “much *surpass*” those of Jesus Christ, in evidence and authority.

*A great deal* might be said about *circumstances* of these affairs; as appears from *Lelana's* View; where several curious things appear: but our *principles* will *suffice*; details would be *tedious*, and *imperfect*: we have no reason, as *Christians*, to *expect* such miracles; we have *great reason* to *suspect* the Testimony, by which they were supported.

I profess that my expectation is, that if ever God *does* reveal his will to mankind, he *will* alter the course of Nature by some of his Agents. I have no Idea what other *credentials* they *can* have.

And, with regard to the *Christian Religion*, I own that the notion of its being propagated *without* miracles, (supposing it *true*), is more strange, more contrary to all judgments which I can form from experience, than its being propagated *by* their assistance: although, therefore, I have an expectation of *falsehood* and deception in pretensions to modern miracles, or to any circumstanced like those, which are said to have been performed between the settlement of Christianity and the present time; yet I have, from the same experience, a *strong* expectation



tion of *real* miracles, on such an occasion as the first propagation of the Gospel.

It is mortifying to be obliged to speak of the Miracles of the Gospel *collectively*. But our *limits* require it, and make it *necessary*. The answers to *Woolston* will supply *particulars* to the attentive reader. I would especially recommend *Lardner's* answers, at the beginning of the last Volume of his *works*.



## C H A P. XVII.

## OF PROPHECIES.

PROPHECIES may be conceived as a species of *miracles*, the *Law* of Nature which they violate is that, by which we are made ignorant of future events; but this conception may seem rather confused; we may therefore as well not confine ourselves to it.—The word Prophecy needs no *definition*; we know sufficiently, without explanation, what is meant by it:—there may be some utility in *dividing* prophecies into different *sorts*:—

1. We may mention those of the *Old Testament*; these seem to be well enumerated by Bishop *Newton*, in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies* which have been fulfilled or are fulfilling. The purpose of this learned Prelate was, to compare *History* with Prophecy; he tells us, towards his conclusion, (p. 439, Vol. III.) that the study of History led him to the study of Prophecy.

He mentions only one Prophecy before that of *Noah*, namely, Gen. iii. 15. which verse he thinks unworthy of Moses or any sensible writer in any other sense besides a prophetic \* one.—He then gives a Dissertation on Noah's † Prophecy, and its completion: another on the prophecies concerning *Ishmael* ‡; and others in like manner upon the prophecies concerning *Jacob and Esau*; on *Jacob's* prophecies concerning his *Sons*, particularly *Judah*: on *Balaam's* Prophecies, and on those of *Moses*. Then he takes the subjects in the order of the several

\* Vol. I. p. 10. † Gen. ix. 25, 26, 27.

‡ Gen. xvi. 6—12.—xvii. 20.—xxi. 13, 18.



ral *Nations*, whose fortunes were foretold; he collects the various Prophecies concerning the Jews, the Ninevites; the inhabitants of Babylon, with their City; concerning Tyre, and Ægypt; after which, he applies himself to the Prophecies of *Daniel* separately from the rest.—If we take the prophetic *Books* of the Old Testament; we must mention four Books of the *Major* Prophets, and twelve of the *Minor*; all of whom lived between about 800 years before Christ, and 430; Malachi was the last: not that it is quite certain when each prophet lived, though the time may be tolerably well ascertained from internal marks. Prophecy is intermixed with History in most if not all the Books, in which it is found, except perhaps the Book of Psalms.

This may be a proper place for remarking, that the subjects of Theology are so copious, that we are obliged, in a System which contains all subjects, to leave some to be treated in separate works.—This is the case with Prophecy: we can only give the *elements* of it, leaving the completion of particular prophecies, to other works. Indeed our readings in Bishop Pearson on the Creed will contribute greatly to supply the defect we speak of.

The same kind of omissions are made in *other* extensive *Systems*;—as in those of Natural Philosophy, Law, History, &c. No one, who teaches all the *Branches* of Natural Philosophy, gives all the particulars contained in *Smith's Optics*.

2. We must next mention the Prophecies of the *New* Testament. Bishop Newton also enumerates these, and points out their completion, as far as they are already completed; for, though some of them are completed, others remain uncompleted. Bishop Newton has four dissertations on our Saviour's Prophecies relating to the destruction of  
*Jerusalem:*

*Jerusalem*: one upon St. Paul's Prophecy of the *Man\* of Sin*, and one upon his Prophecy of the *Apostacy† of the latter times*: and nearly an whole octavo volume on St. John's Prophecies in the Book of *Revelation*.

3. There seems to have been a sort of Prophecy distinguishable from both the foregoing; chiefly by its being *occasional*. In the New Testament it is called the *Gift ‡ of Prophecy*, but there seems to have been something analogous to it under the Old, as may appear from Deut. xiii. 1. already quoted, and from the use of the *Urim § and Thummim*; indeed, under the Jewish Polity, prediction of events which *soon* came to pass, made part of the *Theocracy*, at least till the time of Solomon: under Christianity, at its first publication, this temporary prophecy seems to have been intended for comfort to the persecuted, and for warning as to the measures which it was prudent to adopt ||.

Yet sometimes, to prophesy, means only to *expound* prophecies, or the plans of Revelation;—and *prophets* are accordingly expounders of the revealed will of God;—nay, sometimes they seem to be only the instruments of *exhortation* and edification in general; of that kind of edification, which foretelling events was one means of producing.—The gift of prophecy must operate as a strong proof of the Truth of Christianity.

4 The *difficulties* attending the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, have † been acknowledged to be very great: but yet they do not necessarily take away the argument, on which our faith is founded.

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\* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

† 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

§ See Cruden's concordance under *Thummim*.

|| See Warb. on Grace, p. 27.—and Bp. Horsley's Sermon, on 1 Cor. ii. 2. Appendix.

† See the opening of Dr. Powell's 9th Discourse.



The chief thing that we want to prove, is, *the Divine Interposition*; for, whatever the Supreme Being proves, by interposing in it, is *true*; and, whenever there is such a *coincidence* between any previous notice and a subsequent event, as is utterly unaccountable except on supposition of a Divine interference, there the interference of the Deity is to be admitted and allowed. Now such a coincidence there may be, either when an *expectation* has been excited by the previous notice, or not. If any expectation has been excited, the coincidence of the event with that expectation, is a proof of the Divine interposition, even though we cannot judge of the particular manner, in which the expectation was originally raised; for what but the hand of Heaven could fulfil an expectation of many particulars, especially when they are of a wonderful nature, or of a supernatural sort, or quite out of the reach of ordinary analogy? To feel the force of this remark, we should dwell on the subject; we should calculate the probability against any expectation being fulfilled by mere chance.—The *Magi* probably thought, that the rising of a new Star portended the Birth of a new Prince; and, on this erroneous principle, they might follow the supernatural meteor, which led them to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Bethlehem; what then? though their expectation was founded upon Astrology, yet could it have been compleated by chance? or even without a Divine Interposition, somewhere or other? hence, without clearly knowing the grounds of an expectation, we can pronounce the fulfilling of that expectation Divine.—On this footing it is, that we say, many difficulties relating to the Prophecies of the Old Testament may be neglected. Difficulties are raised as to the grounds, on which the Jews expected the Messiah; but we see that,  
if

if they did expect him, and their expectation related to several particulars, and those of an extraordinary nature; and if events corresponded to those expectations, that is sufficient.

But, though the previous notice raises *no expectation*, (which may happen through inattention, misapprehension, prejudice, &c.) yet the Divine Interposition may still appear. *Events* may bring to light a previous notice of those events; as in common Life we may find that we had been warned of a danger, when we fall into it; though we had not found it out before.—And whenever a previous *notice* and a subsequent event coincide, at whatever time we happen to *discover* the coincidence, there is an Interposition of Heaven.

The present intention of these remarks, is only to prevent our being discouraged with Difficulties relating to Prophecies, when they seem unformountable; we must not conclude, that all difficulties will have such an appearance, when we come to consider them attentively.

5. Nevertheless, it must not be denied, that the generality of Prophecies are involved in *Obscurity*: our next business is to consider the nature of that obscurity, and the probable reasons of it; such considerations must best excite us to study the subject of Prophecy with diligence, and enable us to study it with success.

The *clearest possible* kind of Prophecies we can only *imagine*; we have *no instances* of it. If an event was foretold with all circumstances, of time, place, &c. and was to come to pass, there would be no difficulty at all; but yet, though the completion would be miraculous, this is not the sort we meet with;—why, we may not know perfectly;—the obscurity of prophecies can afford no presumption, that they do not come from the Author of Nature, because in his Government many difficulties.



ties occur. To have prophecies perfectly plain, seems like having jewels ready polished, medicines vegetating already compounded; which would afford no exercise for the Faculties, natural or moral, no probation. We may add, that if prophecies were perfectly plain, the completion of them might be obstructed, unless man's freedom of choice were taken away or abridged: or it might be hastened by man; which would lessen the belief of the divine interposition.—In general, whatever introduces *human contrivance* into any events, must diminish the evidence of their being supernatural.

6. So far we might apologize for the Obscurity of Prophecies, before we come to study them; when we come to study them, we find some reasons for their obscurity taken from the Nature of *Language*, some taken from the *Circumstances* in which they were delivered.

All *languages* abound with imperfections, which are supplied by habitual *feelings*; as was before shewn\*. Whenever God speaks to man, he will suffer his agents to fall into all *customary modes* of speech; otherwise, the language they spoke would, in effect, be the most imperfect of any, as it would be the least intelligible.—*Eastern Language*, when the Prophets wrote, was very *figurative*, therefore so must be theirs. To conceive this properly, it seems necessary to recur to the *origin*† of *figurative* speech: when words are *few*, in any language, there is a necessity of using one word, not only to express the thing it stands for immediately, but to transfer it, (*μεταφerein*), so that it shall stand for another thing, which *resembles* the first:—and, as these

\* Chap. x. Sect. 1.

† See Bp. Hurd's 9th Sermon on Prophecy, partic. p. 286, &c.

these resemblances, couched in a single word, are *pleasing*, they are carried farther, and continued longer, than necessity requires: the degree in which they are used may, I should think, depend upon the *pleasure* they excite; that is, upon the \* *warmth of imagination*.—This relates chiefly to *speaking*.

Language, in *writing*, may be either by an *Alphabet*, that is, a set of marks merely arbitrary, or by *Hieroglyphics*, that is, *symbolic* marks, or by *pictures*;—I mention the Alphabet first, because that is most familiar to us, though the most difficult in itself; but the order, in which the marks were *invented* †, must have been the reverse. Men would first express a thing in writing by some *picture* of it; but this could only express *visible objects*: then they would make the same picture to represent objects of sense, and things *not* objects of sense;—things *visible*, and things *invisible*, as an *horn* would mean ‡ *strength*; and lastly, for expedition and convenience, they would use marks purely *arbitrary*: though how a *Letter*, which expresses *no idea*, should come to be substituted for a *Picture*, or Symbol, which expresses an *whole* idea, is somewhat difficult to comprehend.

When the *mark* of an *Horn* is made to signify an *Horn*, it is a *Picture*; when to signify *strength*, it is properly an *Hieroglyphic*, or *Symbolic* character; and  
it

\* Bp. Hurd rather opposes this notion: but *necessity* might occasion the *first* use of Metaphors, and pleasure continue it; as indeed he himself owns.

† If they *were* all *invented*. Mr. Wakefield has written a dissertation, in order to prove, that *Alphabetical writing* was *revealed* to the Hebrews, and borrowed from them by other nations. See Life of Mr. Gilbert Wakefield by himself, p. 260. In things so obscure as the subject of alphabetical writing, Arguments which we cannot take off, may leave the mind undecided; especially till an opportunity occurs of giving them an attentive examination.

‡ Hurd.



it has been said, we may conceive these to degenerate, by quick writing, into \* *Letters*. As each Hieroglyphic contains more *senses* than one, we may conceive several to be put together, so as to form a kind of *enigma*, which would amuse by exercising *ingenuity*, and sometimes answer the purpose of temporary *concealment*. These and other reasons might induce the *Ægyptians* to continue the use of Hieroglyphics, after they had an *Alphabet*; and other nations to copy from them; which the Jews and others in the East are said certainly to have done;—and some westerns, or at least Grecians, are said to have done the same.

Though Symbols, or Hieroglyphics, had some resemblance to an original, which was an object of the senses, yet they, as well as Letters, were in a considerable degree *arbitrary*; and therefore they might be learnt as a language. Dr. Peter Lancaster† has prefixed to his abridgment of Daubuz on the Revelation, an account of all the Symbols used in that sacred Book, with the interpretations of the antients; the terms ranged in alphabetical order, and making a *symbolical Dictionary*, as far as such a Dictionary is wanted for the book of Revelation.

These symbols seem to have been the ground of the rules of interpreting *dreams*: the ground of the Science of *Oneirocritics*‡. A *Leopard* was a symbol of a *crafty man*; therefore to *dream* of a Leopard (connected probably with other circumstances) was to

\* A *picture* of an *Ax* might at first be a mark meaning an *ax*; then it might mean anything *sharp*, or cutting; a sharp, cutting *reproof*; anything *acid*; at last the picture might be hastily and ill made; deviate from a *picture* into a *character*; and from a character into a mere *letter*.

† Lancaster's Symbolic Dictionary.

‡ See Artemidorus, and Bp. Hurd on Prophecy. Disc. 9th, p. 298.

to dream of a crafty man, or was, to be *warned* concerning some artful person: and so in numberless other cases;—Hence, if the language of dreams was lost, we could find it out if we had the language of Symbols; or if the language of Symbols was lost, we could find it out if we had the language of Dreams: or if both were partly lost, the remains of one would help out the remains of the other. This is the reason why men, no way superstitious about dreams, set such a value on Oneirocritics; they help to teach the symbolic language, and that is (often) the language of Prophecy.

Nay, there is another reason why Oneirocritics should be valued, though it may seem somewhat harsh, or weak, to the unthinking prejudice of those, who abhor \* superstition; God *revealed* many things in dreams, Oneirocritics contain the established language of dreams; the same reasons, which prove that God would use any other established language, though very imperfect, prove that he would use this. By Oneirocritics therefore those revelations are to be *interpreted*. To look at that in Gen. xxxvii. 10. with the idea that a Sun is the Symbol of a King, or Prince, or Head†; a Moon of a Queen, &c. according as the scene is laid, would do no harm.—We see the Father and Mother understood the dream immediately.

What has been said of Oneirocritics, as teaching symbolical language, may be extended to *Divination*; An ‡ *Horse* was a Symbol of prosperity; finding an head of an Horse, denoted prosperity; in laying the foundations of Carthage:—had we  
not

\* May not one conceive that, when a man is made to *dream*, he must be made to dream of some *visible* objects?—On this supposition, the way to reveal (by dream) any *ideas*, would be to make a Person dream of those visible objects which represent those ideas.

† Lancaster, p. 75.

‡ Hurd on Prop. 298.



not known that an Horse was a Symbol of prosperity, this act of Divination might have informed us.

If you ask *why* this symbolical language should be the language of Prophecy, it would be enough to answer, it was the *established* Language; but we might add, that, though arbitrary in a degree, it is less arbitrary than Alphabetical language; and therefore better suited to instruct all nations, in all times. Though it might be more obscure to any particular Nation, than its own vernacular tongue; yet to all nations, taken collectively, it would be least obscure.

Moreover, the obscurity, which it had to the one nation of the Jews, might answer good purposes. They were instruments in the hand of Providence: had they seen clearly to the end of their Law, they would not have respected it sufficiently for purposes of subjection and obedience.—But this leads us to apologize for the obscurity of the Prophecies, by the *Circumstances* in which they were delivered.

7. And surely it will be enough to observe, that the distinctness, with which any future event is seen by the light of prophecy, in any scriptural instance, is proportioned to the nearness of that event, to the times of him who sees it.

To see a very remote event very clearly, could answer no purpose of utility:—but all we want to prove is, that Prophecy is of divine original; now, who but the Supreme Being could so proportion the obscurity of the prediction to the remoteness of the event, as we find them proportioned?—if He made the proportion, no more is wanted; our proofs of the propriety of the Prophecies, in different respects, are all intended to terminate here\*.

8. Having

\* Bp. Warburton (Works, 4to. Vol. iii. p. 488.) has observed, that the Prophets were more *figurative*, after the *double senses* were left off; but this remark cannot well be noticed, before we come to speak of double senses; nor does it seem to contradict what has been said here.

8. Having thus shewn, that we are not likely to find, in the Scriptures, any Prophecies which are as plain and clear as any can be conceived to be, let us go to those which approach nearest to such, in point of simplicity; those which raise one single expectation, of one great and wonderful event, attended with many particular circumstances.—The argument, from the completion of an expectation, has already been urged in general; what we shall now say, will relate particularly to the *Jews*.—That they did expect a *Messiah*, and at the time when our Saviour came into the world, cannot well be doubted: the expectation appears from all the Jewish writings, particularly from their Paraphrases of their Scriptures; the Scriptures themselves speak only of a person, not mentioning the *Messiah*; but, in the paraphrases, the word *Messiah* is found about *seventy* times. In the Acts of the Apostles, it appears from the speeches of St. Peter and St. Paul, (which are no way likely to have been contrived for the purpose) that the point in dispute was not whether the *Messiah* was, or had been *expected*\*, but whether he had *appeared*. But it is urged, that there was no *reason* to expect the *Messiah*; the Jews grounded their expectations on texts, which related to † other matters:—to settle this point is not essential to our Argument: the Jews expected a very great event, attended with a number of circumstances; that event happened; it could not have happened by chance; it could not have been brought about by Art; there is only the Divine interposition, which can account for it. Most probably the expectation was well-grounded; but that supposition is not absolutely necessary:—yet it seems as if the *main* truth should be rightly understood

\* See Gibson's Pastoral Letters, p. 17.—Bishop Chandler's Defence, Contents, and Summary.

† Powell. Disc. 8. p. 125.



derstood by the expectants, though the subordinate circumstances might be mistaken; however, the argument is valid, without entering into this.

Some have thought, that there are no prophecies concerning Christ, which relate to *him alone*: Grotius was of this opinion; (see Div. Leg. B. vi. Sect. 6. p. 506. 8vo. where his notion is well *accounted* for.) But Bishop Chandler shews, that many Prophecies relate immediately to Christ; or, as it is called, in their *primary sense*, or to Christ *alone*: (page 52.—162. 2d. Edit.)—And Dr. *Postlethwaite* adds, with very great force of reasoning, Isaiah vii. 14—16.—See his Sermon preached at Cambridge, Dec. 24, 1780.—But, at present, I only just *mention* this; the proper time for looking at any particular Prophecies, as having occasioned disputes, will be after we have treated of Prophecies supposed to have *two senses*.—This however may be observed *now*; that, about the time of our Saviour's coming, the expectation of the Jews was a single expectation of a Messiah; and that this expectation arose from the *Prophecies*: whatever other events, besides the coming of a Messiah, any prophecies had pointed out, those events were long over and past.

It may possibly happen, that an expectation may be completed *by chance*, as in the case of the *twelve Vulturs* mentioned \* by Bishop Hurd: but what was said † of *miracles*, is true of Prophecies; no *single* one can be a ground of Faith; a single *expectation* may be grounded on many prophecies; and I know not whether too much attention has not been paid to the instance just now mentioned. A city is to be built; it is natural to think how long it will *last*: *twelve birds* appear; the conclusion is, it will last twelve *somethings*; when a certain man,

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\* Page 99,

† Chap xvi. Sect. 10.

an Augur, Vettius Valens, about 30 or 40 years before Christ, found that it *had* lasted more than twelve *tens* of years, the number *twelve* running in his mind, he took the *next* thing, and said it would last twelve *hundred* years: Rome was sacked by Genferic the Vandal A. D. 454, or anno Urbis conditæ 1208; but it was afterwards sacked by Totila King of the Goths\* in 545 of Christ, or U. C. 1299:—this is pitiful prophecying, and very unlike even any *single* prediction in the Bible.

9. The next thing which occurs, is, to take notice, that many men may agree in an expectation, and yet disagree about the completion of it. This does not seem to affect the argument to those, who believe the expectation to have been fulfilled: they must act after their own judgment: others may be biassed by prejudice, or worldly motives, or selfish passions; those, who believe the completion, cannot help that.—If we ask how it could happen, that some men should think the common expectation fulfilled, others not; it may be answered, that might happen by means of figurative, symbolic language; nay, supposing only that the expressions, on which the expectation was grounded, were *general*, capable of being applied to different cases:—Suppose, for instance, it had been foretold, that a great *Poet* should be born in England in the 17th Century, and such an event was generally expected; those who expected it most strongly, might doubt whether *Milton* was the Man.

But what we are principally concerned with here, is the particular case of the *Jews*: of them it has been † said, that they were *better judges* than we are; as they knew the *Language* of the Prophecies concerning the Messiah better than we could, and  
had

\* Blair's Tables.

† See Hurd on Proph. Sermon. v. p. 143, &c.



had a much *nearer view* of all those circumstances, on which the interpretation of languages so greatly depends.

i. To this we answer; it may be doubted whether the modern Jews *do* understand *pure Hebrew* better than ourselves; even in our Saviour's time, they spoke only a *dialect* of the Hebrew. Probably the *Italians* do not understand *Latin* better than the English do. If those who speak any Language understand it much better than others, it is chiefly in familiar idioms. But the language of Prophecy is not familiar; it is solemn; and it is frequently figurative.

ii. Foreigners could judge as well of *Milton's* being the Poet foretold, as natives of England could.

iii. The Jews seem to be much more *prejudiced* than we are; it is not easy to say how *our* prejudices could make us *admit* Jesus as the Messiah; but it is very easy to see how their prejudices could make them reject him. He was *poor*, of low rank, incapable of freeing them from the Roman Yoke; incapable of avenging them of their enemies: and Bishop Chandler well observes\*, that "ambition, covetousness, and thirst after revenge," had cherished the Jewish notion of a Messiah.—Nay, their own scriptures represent them as very much prejudiced, and those evasive methods of interpreting, which they adopted after the time of Jesus, prove them to be so: to which we may add, that, in their evasive interpretations, they differ much from each other; or, as Chrysostom says, run foul of each other in the *dark*.

iv. The argument must not be proposed as if  
all

\* Defence, p. 353. printed p. 343. — ten pages wrong all the way after p. 222.

*all* the Jews had rejected Jesus, for many \* *myriads* of them have become, nay, soon became, his followers:—and in *modern* times, a considerable proportion of the *learned* amongst the Jews, have been converted to Christianity, by studying the Prophecies: and some have written their reasons for the change†. Nor as if the difference between Jews and Christians was upon all parts of the Question; for they are agreed about the particular prophecies as relating to *the* Messiah, and about the *time* when he was expected; they differ only about the *application* of such prophecies.

v. If the proper interpretation of a Prophecy arises from the *event*, as will be shewn hereafter, then those who are best acquainted with the event, are best able to interpret the Prophecy.—Any real facts, which it is only pretended were foretold, must throw *light* upon the predictions; and prove something *for* or *against* them.—Indeed, the Jews might study this event, but I suppose they *do* not, in any diligent and candid manner.

10. The sort of Prophecies which have occasioned the greatest disputes, both of Christians against infidels, and between Christians amongst each other, are those, which were calculated to raise *more than one expectation*, or which admitted of more than one completion. Bishop Warburton has treated of these, in his masterly way, at the conclusion of the fifth section, and in the sixth section, of the sixth Book of his Divine Legation of Moses; and he

\* Ποσας μυριαδας, Act. xxi. 20.

† See Powell, Disc. ix. p. 147; with a reference to Chapman's Eusebius, Vol. 1st, at the end; p. 529, &c. See also (concerning Trajan's time) Bp. Chandler's Introd. p. vii. with a reference to Allix against Unitarians, p. 326. . . . The Jews, at this time, (1793) seem, many of them, so full of *cabalistical* fancies, that we cannot wonder at their not embracing our *rational* religion.



he has touched upon them not far from the end\* of his Book on the Spirit. Bishop Hurd has strengthened his opinion, by many strong and elegant representations, in his Sermons on Prophecy: and Bishop Hallifax has done the same in his, by additional considerations.

The argument about the fulfilling of an *expectation*, on whatever grounded, is independent of this or any particular sort of Prophecy: but it seems proper for us to consider this sort, though we seem to have provided for the conviction of those who do not admit it.

Whatever other difficulties may obstruct the reception of this species of Prophecies, it is no difficulty to the *understanding*, I think, to *conceive* a Prophecy, which shall cause one event to be expected at no very great distance, and yet shall contain expressions too great and lofty for that event; such as shall raise some expectation of *another* event *more awful* than the former, though in some sort analogous to it.—This could not indeed well be done if the language of Prophecy was perfectly plain, and times, places, circumstances, were marked out without any metaphors; we suppose the language of prophecy to be, in the cases of which we speak, highly *figurative*, or symbolical, and to describe sometimes even the *first* event by metaphorical terms †.

When Prophecies are supposed to point out two events, the first event most commonly relates to *Jews*, the second to *Christians*; but there seem to be some prophecies in Scripture, which point out two events, both relating to the Jews: and Bishop Warburton

\* Warb. on the Spirit, p. 321. This more particularly afterwards.

† Here might be read the conclusion, i. e. the two last paragraphs, of Bp. Hurd's 9th Sermon on Prophecy.

Warburton mentions one prophecy that has two senses, both relating to Christians, or to the Government of Christ: Bishop *Hurd*\* mentions also such as have one sense relating to the *person* of Christ, or his first coming, and one to his *Church* after his Ascension into Heaven, or to his *second coming*: we may mention here, that Divines call Christ's coming in person, his first coming, and his coming, or exercising his power, as Governor and Judge, his second coming; though the latter is supposed to commence from the time of his † Resurrection, and to be continued and gradual.—But the most usual kind of prophecy, with two senses, is when one sense relates to the Jews, and the other to Christians.

I speak of a prophecy as raising more than one expectation; but more than one need not be supposed to exist, (or at least not to be strong), *at one time*; there is no sure confidence to be placed in any prophecy, till the event predicted confirms and explains it ‡; and therefore great latitude may be allowed in speaking about expectation of this kind; and all prophecies, which have more senses than one, at whatever time those senses appear, may belong to this head.

But a few instances will be necessary to make this intelligible; First, we may take one of the most usual sort, in which the first sense relates to the Jews, and the second to Christianity. That well known prophecy §, “Unto us a child is born,”  
 &c.

\* P. 132. Ser. v.

† Hurd, opening of Ser. v. But Christ's coming to judge the world seems sometimes to be considered as his second coming. 2 Pet. iii. 4.

‡ See Sir I. Newton on Apoc. Ch. i. p. 251. quoted in Bp. Newton, 4to. Vol. i. p. 536; or 8vo. Vol. iii. p. 7, and in Bp. Hurd in three pages, Ser. 8. and here afterwards.

§ If. ix. 6.



&c. may well serve our purpose. Bishop Warburton\* seems to grant Mr. Collins, that this may relate to a *Jewish Monarch*; and that the language may in some measure be accounted for, by the Eastern *Hyperbole*; but then he says that, supposing it has such *first* sense, in the second sense, it belongs to the "*Monarch of the World*;" and in that sense, the words become *plain* description; and the language made use of is admirably fitted to *connect* two such senses together.

What Isaiah says, xi. 6. "The wolf shall dwell with the Lamb," &c. is understood as having its first completion in the reign of *Hezekiah*; when profound peace was enjoyed, under Hezekiah, after the troubles under Senacherib:—but its † second completion under the Gospel.—I am inclined to mention Jer. xxxi. 15. where *Rachel's* weeping for her children‡, is thought, by Grotius, to be primarily a prediction of the lamentation of the Jewish Matrons for their children carried captive to Babylon: the Evangelist § determines its secondary sense, supposing it had a prior sense, to be, the mourning of the mothers for the loss of those children, who suffered in Herod's Massacre.

Bishop Warburton || mentions, as an instance of a prophecy that had two senses, both affecting the Jews, a passage of *Joel*, contained in the first and second chapters, in which the prophet foretells both a ravage of *Locusts*, and a desolation by the *Assyrian Army*.—That real *Locusts* are meant, appears by the expressions about the *Vine*, barking the *fig-tree*, making the branches *clean*, &c. Chap. i. ver. 7.—That an *Army* is meant, appears by the expressions  
about

\* D. L. B. vi. Sect. 6 8vo. p. 460. 4to. p. 417.

† See Warb. D. L. B. 6. Sect. 6. p. 499. 8vo. p. 450. 4to.

‡ Ibid. p. 492. 8vo. p. 444. 4to. § Matt. ii. 17.

|| Warb. ibid. p. 465. 8vo. 422. 4to.

about *horses*, *horsemen*, &c. in the first ten verses of the second chapter. "In some places," says Bishop Warburton, "dearth by insects must needs be understood, in others, desolation by war; so that both senses are of necessity to be admitted."

This great Prelate \* mentions, as an instance of a prophecy with two senses, *both* regarding the Government of Christ, that delivered by our Lord in the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew, and parallel places: which relates both to the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, (or Christ's coming virtually to destroy that Edifice by his Power) and to the future *judgment* of the world, (or Christ's coming in person to judge the world.)—Some expressions shew, that the former must be meant, some the latter †. St Matth. (xxiv. 34.) affirms, that *all* must be accomplished in the then *generation*; (so that *all* may be applied to the *primary* completion),—St. Mark (xiii. 32.) declares, that the time, when the prophecy would be completed, was *unknown* to all but the *Father*: the former of these texts must relate to the *primary* completion, the latter, to the *secondary*.

Having given no instance of the symbolical language of Prophecy, though I have of that of *Dreams* ‡, I now mention, that the primary sense of the prophecy just now quoted, is conveyed in symbolical language; Mark (xiii. 24—26,) speaks of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*; of which Bishop Warburton remarks §, "The change of magistracy, the fall

\* P. 469. 8vo. p. 425. 4to.

† This idea seems to be strongly confirmed by the uncertainty, in which some of Christ's principal Disciples seem to have been, with regard to the time of his future coming: they seem not to have known whether to expect him soon (in order to accomplish the consummation of all things, judge the world, &c.) or not. See Dr. Cooke's Sermon on 2 Pet. i. 19. p. 12.

‡ Under Sect. 6.

§ Div. Leg. B. 6. Sect. 6. p. 471. 8vo. 427. 4to.



fall of kingdoms, and the Revolutions of States are described, in the old language of inspiration, by disasters in the Heavens, by the fall of Stars, and by eclipses of the greater Luminaries."

If more instances were wanted, Bishop Warburton might be taken about a *New Heaven* \* and a *new Earth*: i. e. a new *Religion*, and a new *Law*.

Or the opening of Bishop Hurd's 10th Sermon. p. 318. 319. about *incense*, *treading a wine press*, &c.

11. In disputes † on our present subject, confusion is apt to arise from want of attention to the meaning of the terms *literal* and *mystical*: when there are two senses of a prophecy, the *primary* sense is sometimes called the *literal* sense; but then we should remember, that such primary sense may be conveyed under *figurative* expressions, which have therefore a *more literal* meaning; as is the case with Is. xi. 6. and Jer. xxxi. 15.—And in the use of the word *mystical*, we must observe what it is *opposed* to; if to the *most literal*, then it may mean only *figurative*, and therefore it may be the *primary* ‡ sense; if it be opposed to *primary*, or to *literal*, in the *sense* of primary, it will mean the *secondary*, or *hidden* sense.

12. This subject of double senses of Prophecies, is the more nice, because many learned § Christians have been prejudiced against it; and their objections have been eagerly seized upon by || *Infidels*. Prejudices have arisen, partly from the excess of allegorizing into which some men have run, partly from

\* Warb. Div. Leg. B. 6. Sect. 6. p. 502. or 4to. p. 452.

† Ibid, p. 491, &c. 8vo.

‡ As in Daniel's *Weeks*.

§ Dr. Postlethwaite speaks, page 2, of "the *subtle* doctrine of double senses"—*subtilis* is sometimes used in Latin without blame; for "*refined*," &c. but here the *Sentence*, taken entire, seems rather to imply some apprehension of error; some want of entire satisfaction.

|| See Warb. on Grace, p. 321, &c.

from the idea that allowing double senses was fantastic, and favourable to enthusiasm; that it encouraged mystery, and made the Scriptures resemble the old Pagan *Oracles*.—*In fact*, men have been the less tractable about it, because they have not been *familiarized* to it; which none could well be but Jews, because it was a thing peculiar to their religious situation: indeed we have mentioned one instance in Christianity\*; but it was addressed to Jews, and is probably a single one: the Jews were so accustomed to the kind of thing, that they made no difficulty about it.

Our business is to throw aside our prejudices, to put ourselves into the place of the Jews, and to ask ourselves, whether we have any solid reason for rejecting the notion of double senses?—There is no impossibility, no absurdity, in prophetic, figurative phrases pointing out two events; supposing we saw no good in it, we cannot say, that God might not use such a method: it is agreeable to the feelings of the human mind, all the *†* antients run into something very near it, as near as human foresight and imagination would allow: perhaps the Easterns most frequently, but Virgil and Horace have been very useful in illustrating *‡* our subject; and the more modern Spenser.

But, in truth, we may see (though that is more than God was any way obliged to shew us) a great deal of *propriety* in the Jews being informed of great events to come, by Prophecies with double senses. Their dispensation was *temporary* and *preparatory*; they must be suffered to venerate their  
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\* Matt. xxiv.

† This Collins allows; see Warb. Div. Leg. B. vi. Sect. 6. p. 510, 8vo.

‡ See Warb. Div. Leg. B. vi. Sect. 6. and Hurd, Sermon. 4. p. 114.



own Laws and polity; and the Mosaic Religion was the only religion they had: had they looked upon it as mere scaffolding, they would have wanted principles and sentiments of Piety, and motives to obedience \* and subjection:—the state, to which their Religion was to conduct men, must be very obscurely pointed out to them; and yet some intimations of it must be given; how could that be better effected than by Prophecies with double senses? what could *connect* so well, what could *open* so faintly, and yet so awfully?—This method would afford them proofs †, from time to time, that their Prophets had told them the truth; and would raise in them devout expectation of what yet remained, for themselves, or their posterity.

This method was adapted to the Jews before the coming of the Messiah, but the great benefit of it must be seen and felt after his coming. When the double prophecies had ceased for some centuries: then, all the parts of the scheme must appear connected together, one wisdom must be seen to have guided and conducted the whole; one power to have presided over it, and to have mixed light and shade in such a manner, as would produce the best and greatest effects.

Surely this must do away our prejudices; as to the Pagan *Oracles*, they were nothing like Jewish Prophecies; they would by no means answer the descriptions now given; they had ambiguity indeed, but could it be said that the most obvious sense led to one useful sort of conduct, and afterwards a more mystical sense to a conduct more highly useful?—that the various meanings of one Oracle, and the various Answers of different Oracles, all made one scheme or system, calculated to promote

\* End of Sect. 6. Bp. Hallifax, Ser. 1. p. 11.

† See Hurd, p. 127; or Pascal's Thoughts.

promote the highest good to mankind? and that the more their predictions were reflected on, the more clearly did they manifest an uniformity of design, an equability of benevolence?

13. It is not unnatural for us to wish to form some conception of *what passed in the mind* of the Prophet, when he foretold things in the manner now described: what did he *feel*? what did he *see*? particularly, did he see *both* the events, which his words delineated, one as a *near* object and more *distinct*, the other as more remote and obscure? we know not the truth exactly\*; but it seems very probable, that the Prophet was greatly warmed and elevated in his feelings, by the prospects which opened upon him: probably he had some glimpse or glimmering of the noblest event, which the words he used could possibly describe, or ever give men reason to expect; and that imperfect view, though too faint and confused to be described minutely to others, probably made his heart overflow with sublimity, and enriched and ennobled his expressions beyond what was necessary to describe the nearer and more distinct event.

14. If therefore any one was to ask, how we *judge* when any prophecies do contain a secondary as well as a primary sense? we might reply, we conclude so when we find a loftiness of expression which is unsuitable to the first event, but which, at the same time that it might, by hyperbole and amplification, be conceived to express that, expressed a second event more grand, noble, and extensive than the former, easily, naturally, and with a sort of accuracy.—This seems particularly applicable to the prophetic *Psalms*: the *second* seems to have two senses running through it most *evenly*:—in the 45th, the *spouse* meaning the *Church*, does  
not

\* 1 Pet. i. 10—12. seems to give *some* answer.



not fall in easily with our customary notions and feelings, though it would with those of *Fenelon*; but the 110th, though “a Psalm of *David*,” can belong scarce at all to himself (when in the first person singular), but must belong wholly, or very nearly so, to the Messiah.—Notwithstanding what has been said, it should not be denied, that *some* secondary senses found in the Gospels, are such as could not be proved to have been intended, without allowing authority to him, who affixes the senses: however, it is no way illogical \*, to prove the divine authority of Scriptural interpretations of prophecies, from their being in Scripture, so long as we have not proved the divine authority of Scripture by those prophecies.

I would recommend it to you to compare Dr. *Postlethwaite's* interpretation † of Isaiah vii. 14—16, with Bishop Hurd's ‡; the difference is not so great as at first it might seem; for, though Bishop Hurd conceives the Prophecy to be intended to *comfort Ahaz*, and the *sign* spoken of, to be the Birth of Isaiah's Son, to whom the symbolic name of Maher-shalal-hash-baz was ordered to be given; yet both own, that the Prophecy belongs to Christ; and both say, that the fate of the *two Kings* was to be a *sign* or proof of the Messiah's coming of the House of *David*; these are the *main* matters. Bishop Hurd owns, that nothing more was meant than “*Assurance*” to Ahaz. He makes more use indeed of the Birth soon to happen, than Dr. Postlethwaite, but he does not make it a *Miracle* in Ahaz's judgment.—Dr. Postlethwaite seems to look upon it only as a way of calculating *time*; except indeed as it was a fact *registered*, and the *name* imposed supernaturally, implying

\* Warb. Div. Leg. B. vi. Sect. 6. p. 488, 8vo.

† In his Sermon preached at Cambridge, Dec. 24, 1780.

‡ Ser. 5. p. 130.

plying divine interference; and a promise of *Victory*. But, as to our present subject, as to the difference between a *single* and a *double* prophecy, it seems only (or chiefly) to depend upon the likeness between the deliverance of Ahaz and the Redemption of Christians: suppose only *one* prophecy, and the deliverance of Ahaz strongly to *resemble*, or rather to be a *prefiguration* of our deliverance through Jesus Christ, and then the prophecy assumes the form (or nearly) of a prophecy with *two senses*; but suppose the deliverance of Ahaz to have *no analogy* to Christian deliverance, and then there is only *one prophetic* meaning; and that relates to the birth of *Christ*:—and the deliverance of Ahaz becomes a mere *sign*, proof, argument, that the promise of a Messiah will faithfully be fulfilled. The birth of Isaiah's Son was *foretold*, as much as that of Jesus Christ; but by a *separate* prophecy.

As something relative to the subject of double senses will occur, when we speak of Types, and Quotations from the Old Testament in the New, we may close it for the present, by the concession which \* Bishop Warburton seems to make to Mr. Collins. “ Most of the Prophecies in question relate to Jesus in a *secondary sense only*; and the rest in a *primary*, but expressed in *figurative* terms; which, till their completion, threw a shade over their meaning, and kept them in a certain degree of obscurity †.”

## 15. Having

\* Div. Leg. B. vi. Sect. 6. p. 496, 8vo.

† Here we might read Bp. Warburton's History of double Prophecies, Essay on Spirit, p. 321–324; consider any of the Prophecies referred to *briefly* in the 8th Section of this Chapter, as relating to Christ in the *primary* sense, and to Christ *only*; and take in what Bp. Warburton says of § Grotius, as far as we found it convenient.—We might also mention again the remark of Warburton introduced at the end of the 7th Section of this Chapter.

§ Vol. iv. 8vo. p. 506. or Vol. iii. 4to. p. 456.



15. Having then treated of Prophecies raising one *single* expectation, and of those raising a *twofold* expectation; we come next to those prophecies, which have raised *no expectation*: but, under this head, we shall comprehend, not only those whose *existence* was discovered by the event, but those whose principal *meaning* was so discovered. That an event is *capable* of bringing to light a prediction relating to itself, has been briefly shewn before \*; but what was said, was not only short, but general; our present business must be to produce a few *Instances*; first repeating, that all we want is, such *coincidence* of previous arrangement and subsequent event, as could not be owing to art or accident. So as we find this coincidence at last, it matters not whether the Prophecy or the completion is the first to make its appearance.—But I wish also to give one sentence of Sir Isaac Newton†, on account of the great and deserved authority of his name; particularly in this University.

“ The folly of Interpreters (he is speaking of the Apocalypse) has been, to foretel times and things by this Prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness, they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the Prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this, and the Prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men’s curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event, and his own providence, not the interpreter’s, be then manifested thereby to the world ‡.”—This passage gives a right idea of interpreting

\* Close of Sect. 4.

† On the Apocalypse, Chap. i. p. 251. See also Bishop Porteus’s Charge of 1794, page 29, where he says, “ I pretend not either to prophecy or to interpret prophecy.”

‡ Dr. Cooke, in the Sermon lately mentioned, says, that the meaning

terpreting by the event; and is therefore particularly applicable to those prophecies, whose existence, or whose meaning, is not conceived to be known but from their completion; those which have raised no expectation, or none corresponding to the meaning which they are found to contain\*.

Instances to our present purpose are to be found both in the Old and New Testament:—though we must not be too particular.

Before we mention instances, we may as well observe, that a *single event* may answer to a seeming prediction *by accident*; as the discovery of *America* corresponds to Seneca's prediction, mentioned by Bishop Hurd, p. 102: after what was said on the expectation of the continuance of Rome, (Sect. 9,) we need only observe, that it required no prophetic spirit, to say, *as* some countries have been discovered unexpectedly, so others *will* be: this is nothing more than concluding from *Analogy*: only in a Chorus the thought or conclusion must be made *poetical*, which it could not well be, without being thrown into the form of a *Prophecy*.

The Jews could not reckon even the seventy weeks of Daniel without the event. (Mede quoted by Hurd, p. 395.)

The meaning of St. Peter's expression, 2 Pet. i. 20. is, that no Prophecy interprets *itself*; that every prophecy is interpreted by the *event*. This notion, he says, gives the right meaning of *ιδίας*, and agrees with the *context*. *ιδίας επιλυσις*, is translated, in our version, of *private* interpretation. One might add, that, in *other* kinds of writing, each sentence *is* intended to interpret *itself*; get the right meaning of the *words* (including *circumstances*, according to Chap. x.) and you have the full meaning of the sentence: not so in Prophecies; if the *words* of a Prophecy are ever so well understood, it is still but a light shining in a *dark place*; the *Phosphorus*, the *Day*, is to shine forth in the *event*.—1793, Feb. 27, Dr. Cooke refers me for the sense of *επιλυσις*, to such places as Mark iv. 34. where *επιλυε* implies, he took off the *Παραβολη*.

\* Bp. Hurd speaks well on this subject, p. 118, 119. (Ser. iv.)



The Book of *Revelation* raised at first but *little expectation*; or, more properly perhaps, what expectation it did raise, was so disappointed and blighted by difficulties then inexplicable, that it died away; “the early Christians,” says\* Bishop Hurd, “saw so little in this prophecy, that they were led by degrees to neglect the study of it.” Scaliger commends Calvin for not writing upon it; and Whitby, even after the time of Mede, enforces the commendation, and makes it his own Apology for declining the task. But this will never be the case again, in all probability. The prophecies in this book having been in a degree unfolded by events, and some wonderful efforts having been made to find the order and plan of it, the ages as they rise will be watched for new events, in order to bring out new explications.

It is thought, that the prophetic doctrine concerning *Antichrist* was intended to be hidden, or mysterious, till the 12th century†. If so, the use that was made of the name of Antichrist before that time, was only so much declamation: I would in this Book (of my System) confine myself to opinions common to all sects of Christians; therefore I will only say, that *events* must determine all controversies concerning Antichrist, the Man of Sin, and the Apostacy of the latter times.

John ii. 19. might be another instance; and it is well put by Dr. Powell in his ninth Discourse‡; (“Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”) where he mentions, Matt. xxiv. 28. — (Eagles gathered together) taken from Job xxxix. 30.

I will only mention one instance more: that is, the 53d Chap. of Isaiah; or rather, the passage beginning

\* Ser. viii. p. 275.

† Hurd, p. 236. from Mede.

‡ Powell, p. 138.

beginning with the three last verses \* of the 52d chapter and reaching to the end of the 53d.—This makes the 12th and last of the passages adduced by Bishop Chandler, as belonging to Christ in their primary sense. Nothing can well be more circumstantial than this passage is at present, and yet the proof arising from it, depends upon the *event*: till that happened, the person, to whom it was to be applied, seemed to be somewhat † uncertain.—It has been applied by the Jews, *since* our Saviour's time, to *Jews* as a *Body*, to *Jeremiah* and *Josiah*;—"Of whom does Isaiah write?" "it is an hard Lesson,"—saith Abenezra; but the Jews, before our Saviour's time, applied the passage to the Messiah ‡: and Jesus was the only person, "of all the human race, to § whom the whole of it is applicable."

16. The evils of interpreting hastily, without the event as a key, or, in other words, of indulging expectation built on prophecy, have been great: men have by that drawn ridicule upon themselves, and discredit upon the sacred writings ||. To this may be reduced the notion of the Jews, that there was to be a *two-fold* Messiah: their prejudices were so fixed, that rather than give them up, and interpret the Prophecies calmly and candidly, by the event, they had recourse to this Hypothesis. I say *Hypothesis*; had it been an *event*, which had made them adopt such an interpretation, the case would have been different; but it was the event, which we consider as a true completion, that made them alter ¶ the course of their expectation: which is a strong

\* Chandler. Bp. Pearson on the Creed. Lowth.

† Powell, p. 140.

‡ Bp. Chandler. p. 158, 159. near the end of 2d Chapter.

§ Powell, p. 140. || Bp. Newton.

¶ That the Jews expected only *one* Messiah, is shewn by Chapman in his Eusebius, (Cambr. 1739)—Chap. vi. p. 497. from the



strong proof both of their obstinacy, (and at the same time of their being much pressed) and of the correspondence of the Life and character of Jesus to the scriptural predictions.

*Marcion*, the Christian Heretic, professed two Messiahs; one ours, who lived in the Reign of Tiberius, and was to redeem the world; the other not then come, who was to redeem Israel:—but the *Jews* make one a *suffering* Messiah, the other *triumphant*; that is, they confound the prophecies about the *Person* of the Messiah, with those relating to his *Government*: no doubt the marks and characters are very *discordant*, but the more discordant they are, the less likely are they to be invented; and, if we see such seeming inconsistencies reconciled in one person, that person is marked the more strongly, and the whole business shews more evidently the Divine Interposition\*:—this is also forcibly

the Scriptural expressions about *the* Christ—ὁ ἐρχόμενος, &c. and from Trypho in Justin Martyr.—That the doctrine of a double Messiah is *now* in Rabbinical writings, appears from quotations in Pearson on the Creed out of the Talmud and the later Targum;—that it is derived only from *late* Rabbis, is shewn by Pocock in the Appendix to his Comment on Malachi; so says Chapman, *ibidem*.—I suppose the time of the *beginning* of the Doctrine is not exactly known.

\* So that every argument in favour of two Messiahs, is a confirmation of *our* Arguments in favour of *one*. If I was a Jew, I think I should always avoid that argument.

To what was mentioned, Sect. iv. of the small degree in which the modern Jews cultivate Reason, might be added the speech made by Lord George Gordon (1793) in the Court of King's Bench, in favour of being covered, (having hat, or cap on) in a Court of Justice—Go also to Synagogue-worship in London, and conclude, that Christianity is not *rational*, because those worshippers do not accept it!

The only apology for the whimsical disquisitions of the Jews, that I know of is, the distinction, hereafter explained, (Sect. 19.) between pursuit of *truth* and of *entertainment*: the Jews, it seems, are *entertained* with cabalistical fancies relating to their law: but will *all* fanciful Jewish writers allow their writings to be *mere entertainment*? and to contain no *doctrine*?

forcibly and well insisted on by Dr. Powell in his ninth Discourse\*.

17. The business of the Divine then, with regard to Prophecies, will partly relate to *Language*, and partly to *History*. He will have every *language* to study, in which any Prophecy has been delivered, or quoted by authority, with the figurative modes of speech customary to each: But, besides language, properly so called, he will find it necessary to learn the language of *Symbols*, or Hieroglyphics; which, though less arbitrary in itself than alphabetical language, has fewer regular helps, such as those of Grammars and Dictionaries; it must partly be acquired from Oneirocritics, and partly from instances of ancient Divination.—But, as Prophecies can never safely be interpreted without a knowledge of the *event* predicted, the Divine will be called upon to study *History*; with Chronology and Geography of course. History will shew the primary completions of prophecies, as also their secondary completions, which, having a mutual resemblance, must be compared; the fortunes of the Church must be narrowly watched, and referred, from time to time, to the sacred prophetic Books;—And, as Heathen Nations have frequently been noticed in Prophecy, *profane* History must be read, as well as sacred; Nay, as it is the distinguishing advantage of arguments from Prophecy, that they continue in force to *all ages*, and as the Christian religion is to be preached to *all nations*, it is difficult to say what part of History may be totally neglected.

18. We come now to the Subject of *Types*; which subject is allied to that of *double senses*.—Bishop Warburton treats them together in the 6th Book of his Divine Legation of Moses. As there is a prejudice against types, resembling that against double

\* Powell, p. 143, &c.



double senses of Prophecies, we will endeavour to proceed in an orderly manner.

Words are the signs of our ideas; but *actions* may be made so equally; hence our different modes of expression by words, will have modes of expression by action corresponding to them — Expressions by words, may be 1. *Plain*. 2. *Metaphorical*. 3. *Allegorical*:—and so may expressions by *action*;—1. *gestures* may be expressive of something *directly* and immediately; or, 2. by some *resemblance* or analogy; or 3. there may be a *series* of gestures expressive, by resemblance or analogy, of some incidents in succession, or of some agreement or compact.—These last are called by Bishop Chandler, “*parables in action*,” by Bishop Warbuton, “*significant actions*.”—The word *παραβολη*, in Scripture, means an allegory, whether expressed by words or by other signs; i. e. by signs audible, or visible. But *illustration* may be required:—1. We express things by plain words, when we speak of a field sown with wheat; 2. We speak metaphorically, when we talk of sowing the *seeds of Discord*;—3. We speak allegorically, or by a parable, when we talk of seed sown in beaten paths bringing *no fruit*, of that sown in *thorny ground* producing but little, of that sown in *good ground*, yielding a great increase; if we mean, that *advice* given to those that are hardened does *no good*; to those that are much occupied by *wordly* things, is but of *momentary* service; to those who are well-disposed and well brought up, is abundantly useful.—In *action*, we express ourselves plainly, when we converse by our *fingers*, or send a *flag of truce*, (supposing the meaning of such actions to be agreed upon) or leap for joy, or wring our hands through sorrow. We express ourselves metaphorically (as I conceive) whenever the act has a meaning by any kind of *resemblance*, even though that meaning be settled;

settled; *bowing* and *kneeling* have some sort of affinity or likeness to *humility* and *submission*; and the same of *striking* a ship, and of doing *penance* in white linen, and administering the *Sacraments*; or, if we prefer an instance from *profane* History, the striking off the heads of the *poppies*, Liv. i. 54\*.—But, as to *third* sort of expression by action; in the way of continued metaphor or allegory, or parable in action; I do not recollect an instance of it without recurring to ancient times: some Historic Dances, or Pantomimes, may be instances of continued *plain* expression; but in the Scriptures we meet with frequent instances of parables in action: the Prophet *Ezekiel* abounds with them; we might take the 12th Chapter and 3d Verse, as explained by Bishop Warburton†, or Bishop Chandler‡:—or Jer. xviii. 1. which may be the more interesting, on account of its relation to Rom. ix. 21.—Or our Saviour's intimation of his design to call the Gentiles into his Religion, given by driving the § money-changers out of the Temple. But the most important thing of this sort in the Old Testament seems the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, according to Bishop Warburton's interpretation ||, with Abraham's receiving his Son from the dead in a figure, ἐν παραβολῇ, (Hebr. xi. 17.) and with John viii. 56. "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad."—Abraham, having received

\* Sextus *Tarquinius* lived among the *Gabii*, and made himself very popular amongst them; but he and his father, *Tarquinius Superbus*, who was at Rome, were really only joining in stratagems against them. Sextus sends a messenger to *Superbus*; no *audible* answer is given: the Messenger returned relates what he has *seen*.

† Div. Leg. B. vi, Sect. 5. p. 377. 8vo.

‡ Defence, Chap. iii. Sect. 1. p. 171. 2d. Edit.

§ Bp. Hurd's Discourse on the Subject, would shew several instances.

|| Div. Leg. B. vi. Sect. 5.



ceived repeated promises of some great spiritual blessing to his Posterity, may be supposed to have intreated Jehovah to give him some idea of the nature of it, and Jehovah to have replied to his intreaties, ‘I will comply;’—“take thy Son, &c.”—if such be allowed to be the opening of the transaction, Abraham must look upon what he was ordered to *do*, as an *answer* to his inquiry; he must proceed to obey the directions given him, studying every step, as a source of information: sometimes alarmed, but encouraging himself; ‘it is a good God who directs,’ he would say to himself, ‘and he directs in compliance with my request: I will proceed.’ His proceeding must require a *confidence* or faith, and therefore, this mode of information must be a *trial*; when he came to the end of it, and had received his beloved Son again in safety, he would form some such *conclusion* as this; though his notion would be obscure;—‘that Great Personage, who is, in some sense, to spring from my Loins, is also, in some sense, to be of extraordinary dignity; he is to undergo a fate analogous to that, which my Son Isaac has undergone; resembling it, as reality resembles a portrait, or delineation; He therefore must be *really sacrificed*; and he must be received from the *dead* in *reality*, as Isaac was in a *Parable*\*. How great and glorious will be the *Day*†, when all this shall be accomplished!—I have been elated with joy, and have exulted at the thought of seeing it; and, however faint the vision, I rejoice in having been indulged with it!—to see what I have seen, to be placed in the situation in which I am placed, is a most ample *reward* for every *danger* I have seemed to incur, for every confidence I have reposed in the God of Abraham.’—I should hope this representation would not only shew,

\* Heb. xi. 19.

† John viii. 56.

shew, in some degree, how the Sacrifice of Isaac might be an information in action, but how it might be rewarded as a *trial*: For the most formidable objection to Bishop Warburton's account is, that, if the transaction was an *information*, it could not be a *trial*.—But, though the instance now given may be the most interesting in the *Old Testament*, yet we should not here omit mentioning the *Transfiguration*, intended, as a significant action, to enlighten and clear up the prejudices of the Apostles against the humiliation and *sufferings* of the Messiah: as well as to mark, with a splendid boundary, the termination of the Mosaic Dispensation, and the beginning of the Christian.—You cannot read *Bishop Porteus's* account of that solemn transaction, without feeling an illumination of mind; a devout yet rational admiration of the ways of God, and of the figurative mode of communicating heavenly knowledge.

When we had familiarized ourselves to expression by action, we should be prepared for the admission of *Types* in \* *Bishop Warburton's* highest and strictest sense.—These are actions, expressive of something beyond themselves, which are so enjoined, that they become *Duties* of themselves, though they are intended to lead the mind to something farther. On this account it is said, that their import is no longer *arbitrary*, but becomes *moral*; to neglect them would be vice, or rather impiety.—The *reason* of their institution is supposed to be, to give “*standing † information* ;” not information for any single business.—We could not take any better instance of a Type, than the *Paschal Lamb*: it was intended to commemorate a past blessing, to prefigure

\* P. 456, 8vo. B. vi. Sect. 6. of Div. Leg.

† D. L. p. 455. 8vo. B. vi. Sect. 6. Gibson's first Pastoral Letter, p. 16.



gure a future one; and the observance of it was a part of external religion; it was an ordinance tending to nourish religious sentiments; like all other religious instrumental duties. The same reasons, which were urged in favour of double senses of Prophecies, as suitable to the Jewish Religion, and as proofs of the truth of that and the Christian, when we look back upon them, are applicable to Types; only we find more persons ~~show~~ of Types, than of double Prophecies; indeed they are more undeniable, as being more expressly mentioned in scripture. Yet there is a prejudice against them, and they have been carried to excess.

It may serve the purpose both of explaining and defending types, if we observe, that the Christian Religion makes no use of any of its own: it leads to no future dispensation; it has no need of any Vail\*; now, if Types had arisen from Enthusiasm, Mysticism, or any corrupt religious principle, they would have been continued still: for we have all perversions of religious sentiments, as well as the Jews had; this looks as if Types, under the Jewish œconomy, had been founded in *Reason* and *Utility*.

Unfortunately Bishop Chandler, a writer of great eminence on Types and on double Senses of Prophecies, uses the word Type in a sense somewhat different from Bishop Warburton: it is a great imperfection when this happens, but I suppose it happens in *Morality* as well as in revealed Religion. Bishop Chandler's Defence seems to be so valuable a work, as to make it worth our while, though no other Authors used the same language, to acquaint ourselves with his meaning. † When things are  
said

\* 2 Cor. iii. 13.

† Defence, Chap. iii.

said of or to *David*, or are *done* by him, or to him, which do not in strictness belong to David, but to the *Messiah*, then David is said to be a *Type* of the Messiah; and the things so said, are called *typical prophecies*: they are contradistinguished, by Bishop Chandler, to "*allegorical predictions*," which seem scarce to deserve the name of predictions; they are rather *facts* or events, to which *allusion* is made, after a manner which seems to us somewhat *irregular*,—but of these more will be said under the head of *quotations*.—Bishop Chandler proves, that things are said of Solomon, which cannot belong to him alone, but must be meant to delineate some much greater character, and are suitable to the Messiah; that is, he proves that, in his sense, Solomon was a *Type* of the Messiah; and he proves the same concerning Joshua\*, the High Priest, and Zerubbabel. Elijah, in this sense, must have been a type of John the Baptist. To avoid confusion, we might call these *personal types*.

Though we mentioned no personal types but those of the Messiah, yet there might be types of others besides the Messiah; or even types of *events*, if I understand Bishop Chandler rightly. I suppose he would call all informations in action, or "*parables in action*," *typical prophecies*;—he calls *Ezekiel* a Type or sign, when he † prepares for a journey, and by the series of actions which he performs, foretells the captivity of Zedekiah. The prophet would, in this case, call himself, according to ‡ our translation, "*a sign and wonder*," but Bishop Chandler observes, that the Hebrew words should be rendered "*a Type and an Exemplar*."

In

\* Zech. Chap. ii. 4. &c. Chap. iii.

† Ezek. Chap. xii.

‡ If. xx. 2, 3. In the *Contents* of this Chapter, the Term is "*a Type*."



In favour of Types, besides what has been already advanced, of their being suitable to the Jewish Religion, and their appearing to us to connect the two dispensations together, we may alledge, 1 Cor. x. 11. in the original. *ταυτα δε παντα τυποι συνεβαινον εμεινους*, and “they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come:” that is, for the admonition and instruction of *Christians*, who can look back and see the Harmony of the whole contrivance.—Some specimens might also be taken out of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: as Chap. ix. 9, 23.—or x. 1.

19. We next come to the subject of *Quotations* out of the Old Testament found in the New. In these there sometimes seems to be an *inaccuracy*, and a *misapplication*, as well as an indulgence of the *imagination*, which have afforded great occasion for objections, to the enemies of Christianity. In considering these, we may unite what Bishop Chandler makes two subjects; namely, the texts said to be misapplied, and the allegoric method of quoting.

First, suppose we could give *no account* of this matter, it does not seem of force enough to invalidate other arguments in favour of the Gospel, considering the situation in which we are: the business turns wholly upon *Jewish literature*; that used to be more *traditional* than the literature of other nations; and the Books, which the Jews had before our Saviour’s time, are lost\*; our MSS of the Bible have their imperfections, and vary sufficiently from each other to give us an idea, that Quotations might be made from MSS differing from ours, (See about Quotations from the Septuagint, Chap. vi. Sect. 4. of this Book,) and that some difficulties are *likely* to arise from those imperfections. Would it not be folly,

\* Chandler, Introd. p. 14. and Chap. 4. Sect. 1. 2d Edit,

folly, in such a situation, to let the mere inability to solve a few difficulties affect our Faith in general? I may say a *few*, speaking with relation to the texts of the Old Testament quoted in the New; for, out of near fifty quotations, there are not above five, I think, to which Mr. Collins himself objects; and one of those is Isaiah vii. 13, &c. which, according to Dr. Postlethwaite's interpretation, is quoted in a manner perfectly regular. Now, will any candid man say it is probable, that an irregular citation of four texts, out of near fifty, has been owing to either fraud or folly? would those who could write the Gospels, and quote rightly in most instances, be so weak and childish as to introduce four texts in a manner, the irregularity of which must strike every one?

In the next place, the seeming misapplication of Texts in the Old Testament may only be owing to our not understanding those Texts; and that evil may be only temporary: we now see, that the Text, which has given Bishop Chandler the \* greatest trouble, would not, if he could have read Dr. Postlethwaite's explanation, have given him any at all: and, as we have got a right conception of this text, so we may hereafter of others,

But, as improvements are uncertain, let us not suppose them. We have now reason to think, that no text, or scarcely any, was ever either cited or alluded to by our Saviour, but according to the notions † of the *Jews* then *present*. The *Jews* loved their Law and their prophets, they *delighted* to refer to them in all ways, to place them in all lights; it was their *taste*, and the manner of their devotion. *Maimonides* gives the right ‡ account of this matter;

“ Our

\* If. vii. 13, &c.

† See Judgment of the Jews, &c. (by Allix) Chap. ii. 3. 4.

‡ More Nevochim, iii. 43. quoted by Chandler, v. 1.



“ Our Rabbins are wont . . . . . to be exceedingly delighted with allegories, and to use them frequently. Not that they thought the allegoric sense was the mind and sense of the Scripture, but a kind of pleasant enigma raised upon the text for the entertainment of the Hearer,” &c.—and \* *Aben Ezra* speaks much to the same purpose. “ They served partly to refresh the mind, wearied with profounder speculations, partly to strengthen those that staggered, and to fill the empty.”—Now, if it is the duty of those, who teach Religion, to become † all things to all men, that they may by all means save some, how could any one better become a *Jew to the Jews*, than by entering into their favourite mode of persuasion? it gave no *authority* to any sense of a passage of Scripture, because it was not understood to do so; it implied no error, no falsehood; (Christians were still to prove all things;) and it made the affinities between the two Dispensations, the Harmony of the Divine Counsels, to be more strongly perceived.—This reasoning will receive strength from the observation, that this kind of alluding, (or arguing if you please) was only used to *Jews*, not to the *Gentiles*. Matthew and John use it,—and St. Paul;—Luke and Mark do not.—And it should be considered, what difference there is between the topics addressed to Agrippa ‡, a learned Jew, and those to Felix §, a Roman Procurator:—as also that St. Paul alludes to *Heathen* authors, when he speaks to the *Athenians*.

One thing which has occasioned difficulty is, quotations of Prophecies being introduced with || “ *that it might be fulfilled* ;”—but this is mere *idiom* ;

\* On Lam. i. in Buxt. Lex. Rabbin. p. 584. quoted by Chandler, *ibidem*.

† 1 Cor. ix. 22.

‡ Acts xxvi.

§ Acts xxiv.

|| Whitby has an Essay on *ἡ αὐτὴν πληρωθῆναι*. End of St. Matthew's Gospel—And consult Chandler, p. 222—2d Edit. Note.

*idiom* \*; it means no more than *à propos* does in French; or than our saying, I dreamt of you last night; now I meet you, my Dream is out. A continued and habitual reference to Prophecy, might generate or give occasion to such a mode of expression.

But it may be proper to take a few *instances*. Matt. ii. 15. “And was there (in *Ægypt*) until the Death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, *Out of Ægypt have I called my Son.*” One does not see why Bishop Chandler’s account of this may not be admitted, till some new discovery shall be made;—this is the most eminent instance of that *proverbial expression* for deliverance from *danger* by the providence of Jehovah; *delivering out of Ægypt*. No wonder the Jews should call all great deliverances, deliverances out of *Ægypt*; and this was such, effected by the same divine power, both in the literal and proverbial sense.—Some national deliverances might be forgotten, at least by the lower people; but the feast of the *Passover* would make the deliverance from *Ægyptian* bondage fresh in every one’s memory. The passages relating to redemption from *Ægyptian* Bondage, are well reckoned up by Bishop Chandler; the reference here may either be general, or to Hosea xi. 1. in particular. Yet it may be best to refer to Deut. xxviii. 68.—Jer. xlv. 12.—Hosea viii. 13.—and ix. 3.—as only a number of expressions can *familiarize* the proverb †. So that the meaning of “*out of Ægypt have I called my Son,*” might be something of this kind;

\* Hor. Art. Poet. 72, Not. in Usum Delph.

† Reference should also be made to Texts, where Israel (which was brought out of *Ægypt*) is called God’s *Son*. Hof. xi. 1. answers in this respect.—See also Exod. iv. 22, 23.—Deut. xiv. 1.—Jer. xxxi. 9.—Rom. ix. 4.



kind; What a curious correspondence and analogy between *Israel* the Son of God, and *Messiah* the Son of God! How affecting must be the *proverbial* expressions of *calling out of Ægypt*, and *sending into Ægypt*, when that analogy appears! When the two similar events are *completed*, they reflect light upon each other, and give each other new *importance*.

In Matt. ii. at the end, are these words; “And he (Joseph) came and dwelt in a City called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophets, *He shall be called a Nazarene*.” Now it does not appear, *at this time*, that there is any such saying in any of the Prophets. The marginal references in our English Bible point out two places, in one of which Samson, in the other Samuel are said to be *Nazarites*; Macknight (page 43.) makes Nazarene to mean “despised, rejected;” but I will mention *Bishop Chandler’s solution*: He is not content with the solution, that the expression, “He shall be called a Nazarene,” may have been *lost* out of the Hebrew MSS of the Prophets, because the Jews had said, “search and look, for out of Galilee \* ariseth no Prophet,”—and had asked, “can there any good thing come † out of Nazareth?”—This must imply, that no such Prophecy as “He shall be called a Nazarene,” was then commonly known to the Jews.—This learned writer thinks, that St. Matthew might refer to *Isaiah* xi. 1. which *all* hold to be a prediction of the *Messiah*.—“There shall come forth a rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a נצר shall grow out of his roots.—נצר signifies either a *branch* (or flower) or the Town *Nazareth*, which was the flower of the country, a very beautiful and pleasant place: the name of the Town may also denote an *inhabitant* of it, as *Moab* signifies the Moabites; Philistia, the Philistines, &c.—  
Hence

\* John vii. 52.

† John i. 46.

Hence Isaiah might mean by נֶצֶר, *both* that a *branch*, or flower, would come of the stem of Jesse, and that the *person* so called might be a *Nazarene*.—It should also be remarked, that this נֶצֶר is not the word *commonly* made use of, when it is foretold that the Messiah shall be a *branch*, of the root of Jesse; צֶמַח is the common word.—This will seem *forced*, and it should only be adopted as a probable solution; but it will appear less forced to any one, who considers the nature of prophetic language: and particularly to any one, who considers Hosea i. 4, 5, with Bishop Chandler's explanation. Possibly any *Hebrew* copy, or *Hebrew* translation, (see Chap. vi. Sect. 2. of this Book) of St. Matthew's Gospel might here have the very *Hebrew* words of Is. xi. 1. —How *new* such introduction of them would appear, we cannot certainly determine. That author mentions another passage, which seems *intirely* parallel to Is. xi. 1. in his way of conceiving it: that is, Daniel v. 28. "PERES; thy Kingdom is *divided*, and given to the Medes and *Persians*." פֶּרֶס, in *Hebrew*, signifies *both* to *divide*, and *Persia*; and, in the hand-writing on the wall, had two meanings, as נֶצֶר is supposed to have in Is. xi. 1.—this authentic interpretation made by Daniel, greatly confirms the fallible interpretation of Bishop Chandler\*.

Of the *Allegoric* method of quoting, Gal. iv. 21. is a remarkable instance. St. Paul does not pretend, that it is more than an *allegory*, a *Jewish* mode of *persuasion*, used when more simple methods seemed to fail of success; in enforcing *particular* points of *Christian* doctrine; for it is always to be remembered, that the persons addressed are *already* *Christians*,

\* The instances in Chandler, about Amos's *Basket of Flowers*, &c. are very apt, and come well from a *Jew*. Chap. iv. Sect. 1. (p. 225, in *my* Chandler, but there is a *false print* from p. 213, for 223, which runs through the rest of the Book.)



*Christians*, made such by regular *proofs*. This particular Allegory was addressed to those Christians who, in their attachment to the Law of Moses, ran into excess; to those who desired to be under the Bondage of the Law, when they might enjoy the Liberty of the Gospel. And must it not be really persuasive to such persons? as lovers of their Country, and as lovers of their Religion?—However, it is said to have been founded on an “\* old *Jewish notion*, that Ishmael should pierce Isaac with an Arrow;” which would make it more readily received.

The quotation of the 8th Psalm, 2d verse, in Matt. xxi. 16. on occasion of the Children crying “Hosanna,” &c. is so harmless, that it will not be suspected of fraud: and therefore it may illustrate the method of quoting. And the same may be observed of 2 Cor. viii. 15. about the *Manna*. Manna is also referred to in John vi. 51.—But it should not be omitted, that the Jews had a notion that the children † *were* to make acclamations at the triumphal entry of the Messias, according to Psalm viii. 3.—Allusions made in this manner would imply different degrees of *argument* at different times; but they would always have some effect on the *minds* of the candid part of the Jews; and for others (besides Jews) they were not intended.

I must not produce more examples; from these it will appear, that, without some knowledge of the subjects of Types and Quotations, the language of the New Testament, especially that used by St. Matthew

\* Allix's Judgment of the Jews, p. 62. See Acts viii. 1. and other places, that the Jews *did* persecute the Christians—St. Paul's behaviour before conversion shews the same. And Lardner, Vol. 1. p. 164. By St. Paul's allegory, the *Jews* become *Ishmael*, and Christians *Isaac*.

† Allix, p. 63.

Matthew and St. Paul, will never appear natural and easy. And these will be best understood by one acquainted with the Jewish traditional notions.

The term *accommodation* is used on this subject; I believe it means, the first publishers of Christianity accommodating the facts and expressions of the Old Testament, to the habitual notions of the Jews with whom they conversed.

This accommodation does not seem to excuse us from reasoning accurately and sincerely; it does not justify our urging that \* as *truth*, which we think to be *falsehood*. It does not appear to *me*, that Christ or his Apostles ever did this, strictly speaking:—Or that their eloquence or persuasion ever was less regular, than the *Argumentum ad hominem*: if any harm arises from *that*, it must be imputed to those who make the *application*.

Mr. Locke's account of the *argumentum ad hominem*, though just, seems to have occasioned its being thought less valid†, and less useful than it is.—If the nature of it is not *mistaken*, if it is not taken for an *argumentum ad judicium*, it may, in its own department, answer many good purposes. Men are particularly *attentive* to any reasoning upon their own principles; and when they are convinced of their own *inconsistency* (which they are by the *argumentum ad hominem*), they grow humble and reasonable, attentive to truth, and willing to admit it.—The arguing of which we are speaking in quotation from, or allusion to, the Old Testament, is generally

\* Dr. Powell's Charges, p. 305. Dr. Powell is not so satisfactory, to my judgment, in this passage, as in others.

† Qu. In *all actual* arguing, are not you generally endeavouring to convince some *person*, whom you address? especially when you are in the commerce of *Life*, not in *Theory* or *Speculation*? Bp. Pearson says, "which I shall not need here to prove, because those, against whom I bring this argument, deny it not." Creed, "His only Son."



generally of the nature of the argumentum ad hominem, if not always.

In the year 1782, Dr. *Randolph* of Oxford, then Margaret Professor\*, published a large quarto pamphlet containing a complete collection of quotations from the Old Testament to be found in the New; the page divided into three columns; one containing the Hebrew of the Old Testament—another the Greek of the LXX—the third the Greek of the New Testament:—with Notes, &c. at the end.

20. We are now to observe, that Miracles and Prophecies are suited to different times and circumstances; and that they do not weaken, but mutually confirm, each other's testimony. "Miracles," says Bishop Newton, "may be said to have been the great proofs of Revelation to the first ages, who saw them performed, Prophecies may be said to be the great proofs of Revelation to the last ages†, who see them fulfilled." The same thing is said more particularly, and with more argument, by Bishop Hallifax‡.—And Bishop Hurd, speaking of double prophecies, adds a new idea; "the events which both" "prophetic schemes point out, are so distributed through all time, as to furnish, successively, to the several ages of the world, the means of a fresh, and *still growing* conviction."—The conviction grows, because the force of *old* prophecies, when completed, continues always undiminished, and every *new* completion adds to the mass of evidence; it grows *fast*, because each new completion illustrates the *whole plan*.

That no part of the evidence of Prophecy should be *lost*, seems the great purpose of Bishop Warburton's *Lecture* founded at *Lincoln's Inn*; which has  
given

\* Regius Professor in 1783. † Bp. Newton, Introd. p. 7.

‡ Bp. Hallifax, Disc. i. p. 4, 5, &c. See also Bp. Hurd, p. 118, and 162. And Butler's Analogy, p. 261.

given rise to so many masterly discourses: it is intended to point out the completion of the prophecies relating to the Christian Church, particularly those, which seem to describe what is called “ the *Apostacy*\* of Papal Rome.”

If Miracles and Prophecy are intended for different *seasons* and *occasions*, it should seem as if there could be *no rivalry* between them; yet some writers seem to have endeavoured to create one.—This has been founded chiefly on 2 Pet. i. 19. where the Apostle says, after speaking of the *miraculous* appearance of Christ at his *Transfiguration*, “ we have also a *more sure* word of *Prophecy*.” hence, as some have thought, it appears, that Prophecy is *more convincing* than *Miracles*: but Dr. Cooke † has shewn, that St. Peter sets up *no competition* between them, but only says, that the Prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ, are *confirmed*, (or *made more sure*) by the miracle of his *Transfiguration*. The passage, according to Dr. Cooke’s interpretation, admits of some such paraphrase as this. ‘ Though you are completely established in your new Religion, yet you must not think yourselves wholly free from danger; you are exposed to trouble and persecution, and to the sarcastic scoffs of *infidels*, who tauntingly demand, why does not Christ come a second time, according to the expectation of the faithful?—let them not undermine your faith by either sneers or arguments; think seriously of the assurance you have from prophecy of his second coming; this will be your best stay, and firmest support: they tell you, that I deceive you with *cunningly devised Fables*; no; my *senses* did not

\* See an extract from a deed of Trust prefixed to Bp. Hurd’s Discourses on Prophecy.

† See before, Sect. 15. Dean of Ely, and Provost of King’s College, in a Visitation Sermon preached at Beaconsfield in 1750, against Dr. Middleton.



not deceive me; the second coming of Christ cannot seem doubtful to *me*, who was an eye-witness of that glorious and majestic form, in which he will probably appear; I saw him *transfigured*; and heard the voice of his heavenly Father, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; such a sight must needs give *me* very lively conceptions of Christ's *second coming*, and must add stability and firmness to my confidence in *Prophecy*. To that let me exhort you to attend as to a *light* shining amidst the darkness of your present ignorance, till the day of knowledge dawn, and the morning-star arise to cheer your hearts with the rays of assurance and conviction.'

21. Upon the whole, the force of the argument from prophecy is wonderfully great. To conceive this, we must look back to the very beginning of time, and watch all the prophecies which have been delivered; faint and indefinite, if very distant from the completion; more distinct, if nearer to it: numerous, circumstantial, describing events out of the reach of conjecture by analogy; and events seemingly incompatible with each other: many of these prophecies fulfilled primarily in one event, and, after many ages, in other events more important and more spiritual:—many of them not understood for a while, but at last receiving an explanation by *events*, which candour could not deny to be an interpretation; yet not solved by facts concerning people of different nations at random, but confined chiefly to *one people*, or to other nations as connected with them, and to *one purpose*; continually unfolded, not exactly according to man's preconceptions, yet so as to excite admiration and applause upon reflection. This of *past* prophecies; those *present* or *subsisting*, are always obscure enough to exercise the human faculties, intellectual and moral,

moral, yet able to be a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths “ in a *dark place* ;” gratifying, and at the same time exciting expectation ; rising in greatness and magnificence, till, as we look farther and farther into futurity, our conceptions are lost in the immensity of the Divine wisdom and knowledge.

The Son of Sirach, a learned and worthy Jew, describing the character which we wish to recommend\*, says, “ He that giveth his mind to the Law of the Most High, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancient writers, and will be occupied in *Prophecies*. He will keep the sayings of the renowned men: and, where subtil *parables* are, he will be there also. He will seek out the *secrets* of grave sentences, and be conversant in *dark Parables*.”

\* Eccles xxxix. 1—3.





## C H A P. XVIII.

## OF THE FIRST PROPAGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

1. **W**E have now considered every thing *contained in our Scriptures*, from which we derive any argument of their authenticity: we come next, according to our plan, to contemplate their gradual *reception* in the world; and to see what conclusions are to be drawn from it: Using the precautions before mentioned, that we do not trust too implicitly to the partial accounts of friends, nor turn with disgust from the unfavourable representations of our *enemies*.

If we wished to make a regular *transition* from Prophecy to the propagation of the Gospel, we need not be at a loss; St. Matthew gives us \* a beautiful prophetic *parable*, predictive of that great and complicated event: a parable, which must have been published to the world long before the prophecy contained in it was completed †; and in such plain terms as could have no other signification given them, in case the grain of mustard-seed had not grown up as was foretold: for “the Kingdom of Heaven” was as well understood to mean the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, or the Dispensation of Christ, as the Roman Empire was known to mean the Empire of *Cæsar* ‡.

2. A *short* account of the subject before us is this; A person, in an humble rank of life, had taught

\* Matt. xiii. 31, 32. † Matt. xiii. 31.

‡ There are other prophetic parables describing the propagation of the Gospel: Matt. xxii. 1—6.—Matt. xiii. 44—46.

taught men religion, “as one having authority,” and had pretended to be the expected *Messiah*; but he was apprehended and tried, and put to death in a servile and ignominious manner. His followers had entertained, during his life-time, ambitious hopes of advancement in his supposed Kingdom; but, when he was opposed, one betrayed him, another, though of a most zealous temper, denied him, and “all forsook him and fled:”—and, had they been perfectly faithful, they had neither riches, power, rank nor wisdom, nor any spirit of fanaticism, to take up the succession: nor any views, after the death of their Lord, of any worldly advantages. Let us put ourselves in their place, or in that of Jews or Heathens; what was to be *expected*? Why, considering the obscurity, and poverty, and simplicity of the first Christian teachers; and how they were opposed, not only by the Heathens whose religion they despised, but by the Jews whose religion they honoured as Divine; considering that all those, who were distinguished for wisdom, affected to treat them with contempt; it was to be expected, that the Christian Religion would die away, and be totally lost and forgotten: This was the case on other *similar* occasions\*; but here the contrary happened; there was a pause of some days, between the time of the final departure of this Leader, and the famous day, on which his Teachers professed to receive their Commission; but, after that, the new religion began to spread; it spread gradually, but what may be called rapidly and irresistibly, on every side. Though it had to overcome men’s prejudices, and to make them sacrifice their Interests; though it required the most inveterate habits to be conquered, habits corporeal, intellectual, and moral: though it sometimes demanded a degree of  
resolution

\* See Salisbury’s Bullet. p. 222. Six instances, from Josephus.



resolution and fortitude beyond all probable expectation, and though it frequently exposed men to death itself.

3. What can be thought of such an event as this? how can it be accounted for?—There have been *three* methods of *accounting* for it, and of applying it, in the way of argument, to the proof of a Divine superintendence over the interests of Christianity.

Some Christians content themselves with considering the Gospel-history as the cause, and this progress of the Christian Doctrine as the effect. If the things related in the Gospel-history were really done, say they, such an effect might be produced; but the effect is utterly unaccountable, if we may not ascribe it to such a cause; that is, the first propagation of Christianity proves the truth of the Gospel *History*: no such effect could have followed from fiction or imposture.

But there are some, who think something more is wanting to produce phænomena so very extraordinary; something more than even the wonders related in the Gospels, supposing the accounts of them indisputable: they think, that not only relations of past miracles must have been wanted, to accomplish such ends, but, when the evidence of such miracles became difficult to examine thoroughly, by distance of place, and other circumstances, a continuation of miracles must have been requisite, during the whole time that Christianity remained unprotected by the civil power: when therefore it is said, that miraculous powers did subsist in the Church for some centuries, they think the thing probable: and are inclined to believe, that many of the miracles pretended to by the ancient Christians, were really performed.

A third

A third set of men go farther still; and hold, that the phænomena of the propagation of the Gospel were so great and wonderful, that not even continued miracles were sufficient to account for them, unless some supernatural *influence* was used immediately upon the hearts of the Converts. So long as the reason of those, to whom the Gospel was preached, was clouded by error, and obstructed by prejudice; whilst their hearts were debased and enslaved by mean and worldly passions; no preaching, however confirmed even by miraculous evidence, could have had its due effect \*. Still, the internal influence of Heaven on the Heart would have been wanted.

4. Dr. *Powell* has well observed, that it matters not much which of these suppositions is adopted: from any of them it follows, that the Christian Religion is *divine*.—The first is the most simple, though all three might be admitted, or any one, or two: indeed, the two latter imply the first. The narrations of the Gospel miracles might be true, and yet there might be some miraculous power continued in the Church for three centuries; and the converts might also be influenced from above: or internal influence might have place *without* continued miracles. The suppositions shew one thing; that the propagation of the Gospel has been thought truly wonderful and supernatural; modes of accounting for it are marks of admiration, at least, if not of sound judgment.

5. What has been said already may, in some sense, be called an account of the propagation of Christianity; but it is a matter so grand, so interesting, so important, as to merit *more particular* attention; as to the *fact*, the *solution* of that fact, and the *conclusions* which may be drawn from it.

6. As

\* Matt. xiii. 58.



6. As to the *fact*, we may truly say, that, if we could get good accounts of it, such as would give us distinct and lively ideas, it would be the most interesting of subjects; equally improving to the *Christian* and the *Scholar*: though nothing less than being *present* at the different scenes, would give us a perfect conception. We should *see* the magnificence of the *Heathen Temples*, the fine workmanship of the *Statues*; the *Priests*, the *Victims*, superbly adorned; the attendant *youths* of both sexes, blooming with beauty, performing all ceremonies with gracefulness, heightened by every ornament; the *Magistrates* with insignia; the religious feasts, dances, illuminations; we should *hear* the concerts of voices and instruments; we should be surrounded by the *perfumes*:—we should observe, how every part of Religion was contrived to allure and captivate: we should see how much all men were *attached* to it, not only of the lower ranks, but the most improved and the best informed: for we, in our improved times, are apt to think Jupiter, Apollo, and Venus, so absurd, as Deities, that we have no idea or feeling of the attachment of the Heathens to their Gods\*.—When we had got some idea of the Heathen Religion, we should go to a meeting of *first Christians*; plain, simple, and incommodious; concealed in some degree; under alarms from danger of persecution: one such meeting we should see at least in every century, till the end of the fourth:—we should hear the Heathens conversing about the Christians in private life; and deliberating about them in Councils of State;—we should

\* Libanius Orat. pro Templis might be consulted, Lard. Vol. VIII. 440, &c. and the petition to restore the Altar of Victory, Vol. IX. p. 136, &c. And Lardner's Account of Zosimus—this again in Sect. 18. And, to the same purpose, B. I. Chap. xii. Sect. 16.

should attend the *tribunals* of the heathen Magistrates, and hear the early Christians accused, defended, condemned: listen to the *topics* made use of in accusing and defending: we should attend the convicts to the *stake*, or the Cross, see their mild fortitude, their heroic benevolence: or first, we should attend them to *prison*, and see their fellow-Christians crowding about them, giving up every sort of convenience, in order to afford them relief and support in their confinement.—We should enter into the *domestic* retirements of those families, which were wholly converted, and see their amiable virtues, and their animated piety:—or of those, which were become Christians *in part*, and see the conflicts between religious and filial duty;—between Christian Devotion, and fraternal affection.—We should see the zealous labours of the *Clergy*, their minds enflamed with the greatness, the novelty, the *danger* of their situation; free from worldly views of gain, or rank, or power, wholly fixed upon Heaven and the means of attaining it, instructing, perswading, exhorting, convincing.

And it may here be permitted to observe, by the way, that whoever carries on this train of thought, must perceive that any one, who was master of the History and antiquities of the early ages of Christianity, might form fables, *μυθοι*, out of them, for *Epic or Dramatic* compositions, which would be extremely interesting, affecting, and improving.

7. The intent of seeing all the things just now mentioned would be, to get as full a conception as possible of what those persons had to give up, who determined to embrace Christianity; but *seeing* is now out of our power: we must come as near it as we can, by reading. The Books, which it would be natural to consult, are Jewish, Heathen, and Christian; but I will not dwell on what the *Jews*



had to give up, in order to become Christians; their temple, their solemn rites, their distinction from the rest of mankind; (though it was to them an important and trying sacrifice;) because it is better known to those, who are accustomed to the reading of the Old Testament, than what we have now been describing: but every one should *reflect* upon it, enough to be sensible, that the Christian Religion must be “unto the *Jews* a stumbling-block,” as well as “unto the Greeks foolishness.”

We shall keep therefore the *Gentiles* chiefly in our view. But how is any knowledge of them to be got, which shall supply the place of actual intercourse?—are *all* the Authors, Heathen and Christian, to be read, who wrote between the Death of Christ and the full establishment of Christianity?—are the Christians sufficiently impartial? are they not too zealous and superstitious?—and, as to the Heathen writers, how little do they say about Christianity?—we may read Tacitus, and Suetonius, Pliny, and Dion Cassius, and find very little to our purpose in any of them:—even Josephus will only involve us in disputes on the question, whether he has said any thing whatsoever about Christianity\*. If the student is desirous to get the information here mentioned, and yet thinks himself unable; it may be acceptable to him to find, that a Collection has been made, by Dr. *Lardner*†, of all the passages in *Heathen* (and indeed in *Jewish*) authors, which have any relation to Christianity; and that all helps have been given by him for the right understanding of those passages; such as the lives and characters of the several authors, with their connexions, views, and sentiments.

If reading this work were found too much, the student might consult Professor *Bullet's* short History and

\* Before in Chap. xiv. Sect. 12.

† This work was mentioned before, Chap. xii. Sect. 9.

and Discourse, with Mr. *Salisbury's* translation and notes.—*Dr. Powell's* 10th and 11th Discourses should not be passed over:—but, if he reads these shorter works only, he would do well to consult Lardner for the times and characters of the authors referred to in them.

We would wish to make use of all authors; but the testimonies of Christians would be undervalued, and bring on disputes; we therefore wave them as much as possible. Nay, we ourselves lament the instances of indiscreet zeal, which we meet with in some ancient Christians; and of a desire to persuade, so strong as to interfere with truth and just reasoning. As the injudicious parent persuades his child to what is right, and deters him from what is wrong, by every foolish and superstitious argument; so, it is to be feared, weak Christians have sometimes endeavoured to persuade and deter those, whom they wished to convert, or to preserve from Heresy: and a few instances of this sort must hurt a writer's credit almost irretrievably — Yet, with caution we may draw very good information from Christian writers; and all must allow, that they are to be attended to, when they give accounts of events in one country, like those which heathen writers give of events in another: or, when they copy *Edicts*, &c.

8. Some Heathen writers have written against Christianity; others have only mentioned it occasionally: we have lamented \* the loss of the works of the former, whether owing to violence, or mere contempt and neglect; it is from the latter that we chiefly take our materials for an History of the propagation of the Gospel.—But, for making a right use of these and others, some preparatory considerations are wanted.

9. First,

\* B. I. Ch. xii. Sect. 17.



9. First, we may observe, that Christians were not always called by that name. At first, *Jews and Christians* were *confounded* together, or very little difference made between them: indeed, to neglect distinguishing, where two things are like each other, and very unlike all other things, with which you are apt to compare them, is very natural; the Jews and Christians were like each other, in worshipping one invisible God, and in holding no fellowship, or communion in worship, with any species of Idolaters: and, in this, they were unlike all the Heathen world\*. Both Jews and Christians came to Rome (and other places) from Judea, and both acknowledged the Divine authority of the Religion of Moses. The name of *Christians* was first given to the new sect, at Antioch, before the publication of the Acts of the Apostles; but, both before and after that time, they were distinguished by several other names. These we should be aware of, otherwise we might read a passage in an Heathen author, relating to Christians, and imagine it related to some other persons. When we read of *Galileans*, or *Nazarenes*, we might suspect Christians to be meant; but not so perhaps, when we read of *Atheists*, of a *Rabble*, of *Barbarian temerity*, of a *novelty*, of a *foreign superstition*, of persons *burning like a stake*, having the *Tunica molesta*, being *magical*, doing things *contrary to the Laws*; or, when we read of *Judaism*, *Impiety*, &c.—However, about the year 160 we are told† that most prose writers called the new Sect by the name which they have at present, *Christians*: though some thought it came from *χρηστος*, good, not from *χρισμ*, to anoint.

10. As these names are many of them *opprobrious*, and as it seems likely that they have done great harm to Christianity, being found in writers of great eminence, and transplanted into the works of

\* Dr. Powell, p. 155.

† Lardner.

of infidels, it may be proper to give the account of them, which is to be found in *Dr. Powell's 11th Discourse*.—Christians have been called *superstitious*, and yet they have been called *Atheists*;—when particulars come to be examined, the superstition appears to be professing a religion very different from that of their Ancestors; and the Atheism, despising all the Heathen Gods, and holding no communion with their worshippers, as such\*.—Christians have been called low, and illiterate, and mean, and yet they have been called wise, versed in magic and Necromancy: on examination, their vulgarity seems to have been nothing more than plainness and industry in useful occupations; their powers of magic, miraculous powers.—The charge of *Necromancy* might originate in the doctrine of the *Resurrection*, and particularly in the Apostles being always ready to lay the foundation of their preaching in the Resurrection of Christ†.—Lastly, Christians have been called lazy and indolent, and yet they have been called restless and busy; their indolence was a want of the common endeavours to get money; so that they had nothing to give the Gods; their restlessness, a great assiduity in doing good, in succouring their distressed brethren; and perhaps in converting their acquaintance to Christianity.

II. It seems requisite for a right understanding of detached passages selected from Heathen Authors, to have a just notion of Heathen, and especially Roman ‡ *Toleration*.—Amongst Idolaters, each nation

\* Christians have been called weak, flexible, credulous; and yet they have been called obstinate, and punishable for mere obstinacy: on inquiry, their weakness and credulity is found to consist in believing prophecies and miracles; and their obstinacy, in persisting in their faith, in spite of the persuasions of friends, and the terrors of the civil power.

† See Acts xvii. 18, 32.—Acts xxiii. 6.—xxiv. 21.—xxvi. 8, &c.

‡ See Divine Legation, Index—*Toleration*, or *Religion*.



nation was supposed to have its own Gods; and no better argument was expected from any one for worshipping any particular Gods, than that they were the Gods of his Ancestors\*. St. Paul therefore very aptly, when addressing himself to a Roman Governor, pleads, that he worshipped the God † of his Fathers. . . . The Romans conquered many nations, but they suffered each to keep its own ‡ religion; and, even in the city of Rome, when a great number of foreigners resided there, a great number of different Deities were allowed. Dion Cassius § makes the number of nations, who had each its own Gods, *Six Hundred*. The Romans, accustomed to this, thought that Christians ought to be contented, if their God Jesus was admitted on the *same footing*; but, though the Apostles were remarkably discreet and delicate in their manner of publishing the Gospel, they never dissembled the truth: and, in after times, the Christians in general were obliged to declare positively against all intercommunity of Gods, and to refuse all kinds of respect to Idols. “They would not || throw a little frankincense upon an Altar, or put their hand to their Lips, when they passed by a Temple.” When ¶ Pliny said, that Christians were punishable for their obstinacy about such matters, whether what they persisted in was good or bad, he must presuppose, that modes of religious worship were in themselves indifferent.

Mr. Hume † prefers Polytheism to Theism, and of course to Christianity, in respect of *Toleration*, but, as it seems to me, unjustly. 1. The Romans, who,

\* Perhaps Ægypt should be excepted from those, who allowed all to worship their own Gods.

† Acts xxiv. 14.

‡ See Lardner's Credib. Part 1. Book 1. Chap. viii.

§ See Powell, p. 156.

|| Powell, p. 186.

¶ Lib. 10. Ep. 97.

‡ Hume's Nat. Hist. Rel. Sect. 9

who, I suppose, were accounted as tolerant as any people, seem not to have allowed, in *Theory*, any strange Gods to be worshipped, either publicly or privately, without legal \* authority. 2. They were tolerant only in *trifles*;—the difference between one species of idols and another, was not important; scarcely more so than different modes of courtesy and civility. Christians are as tolerant, when they allow the omission of water-baptism,—(Nay, the *Ægyptians* were confessedly intolerant, even about different species of *Idols*: or *Brutes*, as objects of worship.) 3. They could not be really tolerant from any principle of duty, because they would not bear any reasoning against their Gods; nor even some sorts of neglect of them: they would determine in what degree men should differ from them; they would not allow men to profess and defend their belief in the *Unity* † of God.—And how is the idea of heathen Toleration to be made consistent with the barbarous persecutions of Christians? 4. *Christians*, as *such*, are not intolerant: the Christian Emperors did, in early times, lay more restraints upon the Pagan Religion than we can now approve; and some professors of Christianity have carried persecution to a length which we detest; but, as the knowledge of Christianity improves, toleration becomes more understood and practised; which could not be if Christianity, or Theism, was any way inconsistent with toleration. I conceive there are now many Christians, who really desire, that every man should use his reason and

\* Separatim nemo habessit deos; néve novos, sed ne advenas, nisi publicè adscitos, privatim colunto. Cic. de Leg. ii. 8.—quoted in Lardner's Works, Vol. 1. p. 190.

† Lardner says, (Cred. B. 1. Chap. viii. Sect. 7.) that the *Supreme* God might be worshipped in the Roman Empire: but did not that mean, that the *Jews* might worship the God of the Jews?



and form his opinions freely; even of those who are for having the members of the same religious *Society* agree in some things, for the sake of peace and unity; or who are afraid of trusting men of very different religious tenets with great *civil power*, in the same government.

12. The subject of Toleration naturally leads to that of the *Persecutions* against Christians, before the time of Constantine the Great: of which we should have some idea, in order to understand the progress of Christianity.—As disputes have drawn this subject out into a great length, we must be content to let it be treated by others as a separate subject, and only treat it ourselves in a summary way.

Several writers have endeavoured to lessen the importance of the Persecutions: We may particularly mention Dr. Taylor\*, Mr. † Walpole, and Mr. Gibbon; even Mosheim ‡ has controverted the common opinion, that they were *ten* in number. *Augustin* § has given a short account of ten, and so, I think, has Sulpicius Severus; and *Eusebius* has reckoned eleven; Dr. Blair, in his chronological tables, gives ten ||.—If it be asked, what opinion I should recommend, I should answer, that I am inclined to agree with Lardner†, who follows Eusebius, in admitting *eleven*; I would observe, at the same time, that some historical disputes might be owing to the persecutions having been called *general*. Instances of particular persecutions might be,

\* Answered by Warburton, Pref. to 2d. Part Div. Leg.

† Historic Doubts, Pref. p. vii.

‡ De rebus Christianorum, p. 97. quoted by Lard. Test. 3. 336.

§ Quoted ib. p. 338. from de Civ. Dei. 18. 52.

|| Sulp. Severus gives a short account of the Persecutions, Lib. 2.

† Works, Vol. viii. p. 337.

be, Nero's from Tacitus, the Martyrs of Lyons, and St. Lucian's Martyrdom under Maximian, *from* Eusebius \*. I believe, that Christians were less persecuted by Heathens at first †, than is generally thought; but, if we go to Dioclesian's Persecution, we shall have cruelty enough.

If it be asked, for what *reason* these persecutions were carried on, we may answer, probably because *families* were disturbed, and things were seen to go out of their usual course, which would have the appearance of disorder and irregularity; the *Priests* were probably very clamorous, when they found great deficiencies, in worshippers, and in *Victims*.—Though the Magistrates did not suspect the Christians of ambitious designs, in increasing their numbers, yet they wished to bring things back into their old train; to do this, they tried gentle punishments; these being unsuccessful, they became exasperated, and determined to raise a terror by excessive severity ‡; all in vain.

Lardner

\* Translations of these passages may easily be found in *Lardner's Works*, by the *Index*: as also the *original* passages in Tacitus and Eusebius.—Lard. Works, Vol. vii. p. 253, from Tacitus's *Annals*, 15. 44.—Also p. 417. from Euseb. Lib. v. pref. and Cap. 1.—Also Lard. Works, Vol. iii. p. 324, from Euseb. Hist. Eccl. 8. 13. & 9. 6.

*Dioclesian's* persecution makes the 40th Chapter of Lardner's *Heathen Testimonies*. Works, Vol. viii. p. 293, &c,—It is mentioned here again in Sect. 15.

The Reader is to conceive, that, at the *Lectures*, passages were occasionally *read*, out of various authors, as time and opportunity allowed: they were always read in that Language, which seemed best to convey the sense: that is, in English, when a good translation could be found, or one which only required an explanatory remark here and there. Lardner's collection is so large, that, after I became acquainted with his works, I frequently used his translations; not unfrequently of passages which I had before used in the original, with imperfect translations, when the case required them, of my own.

† Lard. Credib. Part I. Book 1. Chap. 8.

‡ See Lardner's Works, Vol. viii. p. 333, 334. & Matt. x. 34, 35.



Lardner is of opinion that, in some sense, Christians might be said to be under continued persecution for the three \* first centuries: in theory, they probably were, though, in fact, persecution seems to have been often suspended; and never was universal. It must not be said, that Romanists in England are under persecution, because penal *laws* are in being against them; for these Laws are only of a political sort, intended to prevent revolutions in civil Government: no such revolutions were apprehended from early Christians.

13. No one record seems better adapted to give us an idea of the state of Christians under Heathen Emperors, than the famous Epistle † of *Pliny to Trajan*; this therefore I will read, with such remarks as may occur; as well as the Emperor's rescript.—Pliny had the government of the Province of *Bithynia*, or *Pontus* and *Bithynia*; but he was not called *Proconsul*, only *Proprætor* with proconsular power; his Letter to Trajan was written from his Province, and might be dated in the year 106 or 107. He was Augur, and very much attached ‡ to the Religion of his country.—I will now mention some particular expressions of this Epistle.—*Cognitiones* shews, that taking cognizance of Christians was common, but yet Pliny's ignorance shews, that he had no *Edicts* to execute against them.—It seems severe to doubt, whether *youth* should have no lenity or indulgence shewn it.—*Flagitia* probably were only neglecting the Gods, or the injunctions of Magistrates about them; yet it was easier to punish Christians merely for their *name*, than to have any facts to prove. . . *Duci* seems to imply punishment of convicts:—It is evident, that punishment was now inflicted on Christians merely

\* Works, Vol. viii. p. 335.

† Lib. x. Ep. 97.

‡ i. 12. 16.

merely for their Religion.—They were encouraged to apostatize, that is, to be false, and what they thought impious; and for this they were rewarded.—Ought mere perseverance to be punished, even in things presumed to be indifferent?—Pliny seems to consider sending Bithynians to Rome, as a trifle; but it would probably ruin those that were sent.—Plures *species* inciderunt, “different sorts\* of people fell in my way.”—Attending to anonymous accusation as evidence, (*libellus sine autore*), is tyrannical, and justly reprobated by the Emperor.—We see, that no Christian would, upon any account, sacrifice to heathen Gods, or blaspheme Christ.—Trajan was *Deified* in his Life-time.—Pliny took his account from *Apostates*; how wonderfully favourable, if we consider, that they wanted an excuse for their Apostacy.—Early Christians seem to have *addressed* themselves to Christ;—*tanquam Deo*, does not absolutely prove their acknowledging his *Divinity*, as the expression may admit of an Heathen sense. *Carmen*, a set form, opposed to extempore addresses;—*Sacramentum*, though understood as only an *oath* by Pliny, probably meant the *Eucharist*.—As the repast also meant an *Agape*†.—We see what good *morals* the Christians had, notwithstanding their great attention to mere *Religion*. The *ministræ* must have been *Deaconesses*; Pliny imagined them *slaves*, from the name of their office:—How cruel to put them to the Torture! they were probably *aged*, by 1 Tim. v. 9. and how ineffectual!—Christianity Pliny called *superstitio*, because it was out of his way, and he was out of humour

\* May not *species* mean different *sects* of Christians? many *hereses* must have subsisted by the year 106;—or may *species* mean Christians in different *degrees*? such are described by Pliny:—or different *ranks* or *offices* in the Church?

† Promiscuum, consisting of rich and poor, does *innoxium*, mean, not feeding upon *children*? &c.



humour with it; *prava*, because it was to him *perverse*, distorted, out of the *train* of his notions: *immodica*, because it declared sublime doctrines, and told wonderful things; of *Incarnation*, Resurrection, Ascension, future and universal judgment.—Victims were expensive, gain as well as honour was concerned; both stimulated the Priests to foment a persecution.—That persecution made Christians *give\* way*:—at least for a time.

*Trajan* writes like an *honourable Soldier*; not like a Philosopher, or a *lawgiver* studying the good of mankind. His approbation of *Pliny's* general conduct was harsh and severe.—His saying, that Christians were not to be *searched* for, shews an opinion of their *Innocence*; and also some *fear* of them; his adding, that they were to be *punished* if brought before him, is scarcely just. *Tertullian*† is eloquent upon this inconsistency.

Upon the Edict of *Pliny*, the Christians left off their *Love-feasts*; hence it appears, that they thought them not essential, and judged it their Duty to comply with the orders of the civil magistrate, as far as they could.

14. Having given *directions* for reading Heathen Authors concerning Christianity, it seems proper to ask, whether *all* Heathen Authors, who wrote before *Constantine the Great*, have taken notice of Christians. The truth seems to be, that some have not; nay, that some have taken little or no notice of Christians, who might have been thought likely to speak of them with attention.—We may conceive,

\* It might make men give way, who were before *sincere*: human weakness is to be *pitied*; fortitude to be *admired*. 1793, I introduced here Archbp. *Cranmer's* Recantation, effected by *wearing* him down, and then ensnaring him with *pleasure*.—*Libanius* boasts, that he had made some Christians *dance* round Heathen Altars. Iard. Vol. viii. p. 439.

† Apol. Cap. 2.

conceive, I think, that Heathens, who had literature enough to write Books that should continue to be read, would be *perplexed* about the Christian Religion, if they did not attend enough to it to embrace it;—at first, it would be despised or overlooked; writers would get no decided opinion about it; it would grow, in time, too important and too virtuous, to be spoken of by candid men with contempt and blame;—it pretended to such high and extraordinary things, that it could not be lightly commended; the *easiest* way then for those, who had no particular call to speak of it, was entirely to pass it by. To this the pride of Philosophy might contribute, in some cases; but men are often incurious about sects of religion: and the Heathens, never having had any idea of any thing but different sorts of idolatry, would be particularly so.—How many of near sixty, now present, know the discipline and tenets of the *meeting-houses* at this time in Cambridge? Suppose any heathen to attempt to give some account of Christianity, he would find it difficult, on account of the multitude of facts and out of the way notions, which would crowd upon him, as well as Prophecies.—Then, those who have been concerned in writing Books, know, that the principal subject occupies the attention; and that they are obliged to neglect men and things, and even writings, which all the world is surprised at them for neglecting. Besides, the number of Books which is come down to us, composed in the three or four first centuries, is very small. I suppose the number of Books published in London in one year must be many times greater than all the Heathen writings, which have come down to us, taken together, published in three Hundred years.—We may observe, that Pliny takes no notice of the Christians, except as far as he is forced to it by



by some inconvenience: the same might probably be said of Tacitus and Suetonius; whether any of Pliny's Letters were written to Tacitus, &c. after his Letter to Trajan about Christians, I do not know; then, he must have had the highest opinion of their morals; but, before that, had Pliny and Tacitus been duly attentive, or Pliny and Trajan, they must have communicated about so pure a Religion as the Christian. (See Lardner's *Heathen Test.* Chap. 9. end).—Every instance of blameable carelessness (and we find many blunders and misrepresentations) in Heathen writers about Christians, may operate in accounting for the *omissions* which we find in them, for passing Christians by without Reason: for, when we wonder at their omissions, we take for granted, they would not have omitted any thing without some good reason, whereas, we find that they say many things without reason.

*Lardner* has mentioned some omissions much to our present purpose\*.—From Eusebius he observes, that most Historians, with a view to please their readers, have treated of *Wars*, victories, trophies, blood: Christianity would be far out of the way of such authors.—He says, that Velleius Paterculus's History is not found mentioned in any ancient writer, except Priscian the Grammarian; though Velleius was of a good *family*, and flourished in the reign of *Tiberius*.—That *Lucian* has taken little notice of *Roman* authors, or Roman affairs, though he was a *subject* of the Roman Empire: particularly he has said nothing of *Cicero*, though he has a laboured encomium on Demosthenes; and though *Plutarch* and *Longinus* have made nice and critical comparisons between those two celebrated Orators. — That *Maximus Tyrius*

is

\* *Test.* Chap. xii. Sect. 3.

is not thought by his Editor (the learned Davies of Queen's College), to have made any reference to the Roman History, though he wrote, (as a Platonic Philosopher), several of his Dissertations at Rome, and flourished under Antoninus Pius.—That the Emperor Marcus Antoninus had *two Sons*, which are not mentioned by any ancient Historian; Mabillon speaks of it.—That La Roche, the abridger of *Brandt* the Historian, observes, that “the best way of stopping the progress of Heresies is to seem to neglect them;” mentioning, as an instance, that, in the year 1525, orders were sent to the Convents in the Low Countries, “to forbid preachers to mention Luther and his Doctrine, and the opinions of ancient Heretics.”

Dr. Lardner observes farther, that Epictetus may have been afraid of giving occasion to doubts and disquisitions concerning “the popular Deities, and the worship paid to them.”\*—These observations seem quite sufficient to take off the effect of a mere negation or blank; especially in times very remote, affording us few circumstances, which can be combined and formed into arguments; they seem also sufficient to prevent it from weakening the credit of our Religion.—*Josephus's* silence has been mentioned † before.

I say

\* All these things are mentioned, Lardner, Vol. viii. p. 94, &c. or Test. Chap. xxii. Sect. 3. With regard to *Epictetus*, see also the last Section of Lardner's Review of his Testimony.

† Chap. xiv. Sect. 12. It appears in Lard. Cred. Part 1st. that Josephus preserves many *edicts* of Roman Emperors, &c. of great importance in themselves, which *no heathen* Historian preserves, because they related only to Jews;—the omissions of the heathen Historians, in this case, neither lessens the credit nor the importance of such Edicts.

The heathens knew so little of the Nature of Christianity, that, when they broke into a Christian Church, they expected to find the statue of the Christian God.—See Lactantius *De Mort. Persecutorum*, cap. 12. “*revulsis foribus simulachrum Dei quaeritur*.” and Lard. Works, Vol. viii. p. 299.



I say nothing of the silence of *Jewish* writers concerning the affairs of Christianity, such a very small number of Books in the Hebrew language has come down to us. \*

15. What has been hitherto said, in the farther consideration of the Propagation of the Gospel *as a fact*, has been in the way of introduction to the reading of Heathen Authors about the concerns of Christianity; but yet it has incidentally anticipated the reading of them in some measure; and made it less necessary to be very particular in describing the gradual increase of numbers amongst the professors of the new Religion.

But we will fix upon *two æras*, as specimens, and mention the strength of the Christian Interest in them; leaving the rest to the student of ecclesiastical *History*.—These æras may be, 1. The close of the *first century*, and 2. The time of the Emperor *Julian*;—as he was the last Heathen Emperor.—But, though I fix upon these æras, yet some of the *steps* should be mentioned, by which Christianity grew to the height, at which it was when we chuse to view it most attentively. Christians had thrown things into some confusion, by preaching, and prevailing upon men to quit the worship of the Heathen Gods, in the time of Claudius†; and they were so numerous, that Claudius judged it most adviseable to check them, by ordering what he thought would have the greatest tendency to check them; by forbidding their religious *meetings*.—  
Tacitus

\* This Section might be *concluded* by reading *Mrs. Carter's* Note on Epictetus, Lib. vi. Chap. 7.—It is quoted Lard. Works, Vol. vii. p. 355. Indeed the inattention of the Heathens seems to have been very blameable; and, in reality, more disgraceful to them than to the Christians.

† Claudius reigned A. D. 41—53.—See Suet. in Claud. 25.—Dion Cassius 15. 44.—Powell Disc. 10.

Tacitus says, they were *ingens multitudo*, not many years \* after the reign of Claudius; and we learn from another Heathen † writer, that, before St. John wrote his Gospel, there were great multitudes in many cities of Greece and Italy. In the time of Trajan ‡, Pliny's account gives information concerning a Province particularly well situated for our purpose; as being at a great distance, both from the source of Christianity and the seat of Empire. If there were such numbers of Christians in *Bithynia* as Pliny describes, if their religion had been so long there, that some had deserted it above twenty years before his time, we may well believe those *Christian writers*, who give like accounts of other countries.—We may here mention the Emperor *Adrian's* Letter from *Ægypt*, in which he speaks of Christians as being equally numerous with the worshippers of Serapis; only making a little allowance for the increase between the end of the first Century and the year 134, in which that Letter was written. Indeed the state of Christianity described by Adrian, was not above a Century after our Saviour's *Resurrection*.—There is a difference in the stile of Adrian's Letter of *business*, to his Minister Fundanus, and his *familiar* Letter to Servianus, his Brother-in-Law: in gathering facts from them, some allowance should be made for the flippancy of the latter.

In getting an idea of the extent and force of Christianity under the last Heathen Emperor, *Julian* ||, we should, in like manner, take notice of a few

\* Powell, *ibid*.

† Julian, as cited by Cyril, lib. 10. See Powell, p. 158.

‡ Trajan reigned 98—116. Powell, *ibidem*.

§ See Lardner's Heathen Testimonies, Chap. xi. Sect. 2 and 3.

|| Julian was *Emperor* only in the years 361, 362, 363: he had been declared *Cæsar* in 355.—Julian was mentioned, Chap. xii. Sect. 16 and 17.



few previous steps.—And we must go so far back, as to take in the great Revolution, by which Christianity became protected by the civil power.—Early in the third Century, Tertullian declared, in his Apology\*, as a thing publickly known, that Christians abounded in all ranks and orders of Roman citizens: and, when about a quarter of the Century was past, Alexander † Severus offered the Christians to put their worship upon the same footing with others; and had actually a representation of Christ, amongst other objects of religious veneration, in his private chapel. By the time of Diocletian, men of high rank and authority were Christians ‡, insomuch that some had the government of foreign *Provinces*, with permission not to sacrifice to the Gods. This great prosperity of the Christians did harm to their *morals*; they began to be loose and careless in their conduct; ambition and faction began to appear:—In the 19th year of Diocletian§, that is, in the year 303, began the last attempt to exterminate Christianity by terrifying its Professors. A desperate and bloody attempt it was; savage and cruel beyond conception; and it lasted *ten years*! || The greatness of the efforts, which were made, proved the *importance* of Christianity, as clearly as the prosperity, which immediately preceded them: they extended to Christian *Scriptures* and *buildings*; when we read of the cruelties of this persecution, nothing but pity could prevent our blazing out into a flame of indignation; nothing but indignation could prevent our melting into compassion: but we must now restrain ourselves

\* Tert. Apol. C. 36. See Pearson, Creed, Art. 2.

† He reigned 222—235.

‡ Euseb. viii. 1. Lard. Test. Chap. 40, beginning.

§ Diocletian reigned 284—305.

|| This mentioned before, Sect. 12.

ourselves from indulging either, and attend only to matters historical. The two Emperors\*, who set this persecution in motion, soon retired from Government; though one of them † afterwards appeared for a while, in order to establish his Son in the imperial sovereignty: *Constantine* began to reign in the fourth year of the persecution, when the imperial authority was divided amongst several ‡; and he did not at first hold the highest rank, that of Augustus, and Imperator. So the persecution proceeded, and raged in very distant parts of the Globe: the first relaxation seems to have taken place at Nicomedia (near the Propontis, in Bithynia) in 311; it was probably occasioned by the workings of nature (how often do they effect what no authority, no exhortation, can effect!) in the dangerous illness of the Emperor Maximian, called Galerius §, to distinguish him from Maximian *Herculius*: this man published an edict, giving liberty to Christians to worship in their own way, and signifying that, in return, the Christians ought to *pray for him* to their God: he was probably much terrified, and very desirous to get the protection of any supernatural power.—Though Maximian ought

\* Diocletian and Maximian Herculus, see Lard. Vol. 8. p. 295.

† Maximian Herculus. Maxentius was his Son.

‡ At one time, there were *six* Emperors, Maximian (Herculus), (Maximian) Galerius, Constantine (as son of Constantius Chlorus), Maximin (of low birth, a relation of Galerius), Maxentius (Son of Maximian Herculus), and Licinius (an old acquaintance of Galerius, afterwards married to Constantine's sister, Constantia.) Lard. Vol. 8. p. 296.

§ He styles himself, at the beginning of his Edict, "Cæsar Galerius Valerius Maximian, Invincible, August" (Augustus) "High Priest," &c. See Lard. Vol. 8. p. 306. And Maximin uses *Valerius* as one of his names. Ib. p. 323. So does Constantine. Lard. Vol. 4. p. 138, Note a. So did Constantine's Father, Constantius Chlorus.



ought to have executed this edict in the East, yet, being of a cruel and impious turn, he evaded it as much as he could, by giving only *verbal* orders; but his Minister *Sabinus* contrived to give *written* orders, which took effect; for the generality of men must have become tired of such a continuance of barbarity to harmless people. The next year, 312, Constantine and Licinius, now become his Brother in Law, published a very favourable Edict in Italy, and then Maximin in the East was compelled to write to his Minister Sabinus, pretending to have always been against oppressing the Christians, but only to have consented to it from the necessity of hearing petitions of the Heathens; forbidding all men to oppress Christians, but yet not expressly allowing them to hold their usual religious assemblies:—this Letter or Edict the Christians feared to act upon, knowing Maximin to be false and perfidious. In 313, he (Maximin) was attacked and defeated by Licinius; and became dangerously ill, by poison which he had taken: then he published his Edict, properly so called, and he died soon after. Christians now (in 313) might be said to be *free*; and, ere long \*, the Empire was governed by *Constantine alone* (Licinius having been put to death); and he *embraced Christianity*. On what *motives* he embraced it, we may not perfectly know; we are sure he *dared* to embrace it; and he probably thought that, in the whole Empire taken together, the superior *force* was on the side of Christianity, taking numbers and steadiness, and other principles, into consideration, which would be productive of fidelity: The Empire was less likely to be *divided*, if he put himself at the head of the Christian party, than if he followed any other plan.—Indeed Maximin confesses the strength of

\* In the year 324, or 325.

of the Christian party, as much by his dissimulation, as by his saying\*, that almost *all mankind* had forsaken the worship of the immortal Gods.

The Emperors continued Christian till Julian, (who was indeed only Nephew to Constantine the Great) and ever after him. Of *Julian* we have spoken before.†; we are now concerned with him only as far as his conduct marks out the state of Christianity in his time. He was brought up a Christian, but, from conversing intimately with Heathen Philosophers, or from other causes, when he was about twenty years of age, he turned to *Hellenism*, as he called the Heathen Religion; he wished very much to extirpate Christianity, but he did not dare to attempt it in any way, till he was *settled* on the throne, and therefore of course he attended Christian worship regularly; nay, afterwards, he appeared at Christian churches, though he sacrificed to the Heathen Gods in private. Not that he took this method, because he had no turn for war; as a General he had sufficient ability; but he was convinced, that violence would not answer his purpose: he seems to allow, in one of his ‡ Letters (what had been said by some Christians), that Christians at Bostra equalled the rest of his Subjects there in number§; and they were certainly more united than any other large number of men, though not so much as they had been. He did indeed banish || Athanasius repeatedly, but, in other cases, he seems only to have taken measures, which he thought would have a *tendency* to hurt the Christian Interest. He interfered with the education of  
their

• Maximin to Sabinus, Lard. Test. Chap. xl. Sect. 9.

† I. XII. 17.

‡ Letter to People of Bostra; Lard. Test. Chap. 46.

§ Lard. Test. Chap. 46.

|| Lard. Works, Vol. 8. p. 414.



their youth, forbade them to teach the liberal arts, kept them out of offices, tried to destroy their writings, evaded inflicting punishment on those who had killed a Bishop at Alexandria;—but his chief view was to excite the Christians to quarrel with one another; he advises the people of Bosra to banish their Bishop, Titus, a very valuable man; because he had presumed to ascribe their quiet behaviour to his own admonitions. Ammianus Marcellinus, an Heathen Historian, but very impartial, says\*, that Julian called Bishops from banishment, on purpose to excite divisions amongst them. He had seen the Heresies then subsisting, and knew the grand controversy between Catholics and Arians, which had occasioned the Council of Nice. . . . . But, as his caution shews how strong the Christians were in his time, so his writings shew how good and virtuous they were: particularly his Letter to *Arsacius* †, High Priest of Galatia, in which he reprimands the Heathen Priests for not following the example of the Christian Clergy, in sobriety, humanity, charity, and sanctity of life:—this Letter contains such extraordinary encomiums (incidental and reluctant indeed, but the more forcible on that account) on Christians, that it seems necessary to add, that its genuineness has never been questioned. —After Julian, there were no more Heathen Emperors; would we could say, that all the Christian Emperors, who followed, made the prosperity of their religion to depend on the same intrinsic excellence, which had occasioned its advancement! or that the Body of Christians had always, in their state of security, continued to be as gentle, and pure, and virtuous, and as much united amongst themselves,

\* See Lard. Works, Vol. 8. p. 369.

† We have a good part of this Letter in English, in Lard. Works, Vol. 8. p. 416.

themselves, as whilst they were under trials and persecution!

16. Having thus taken a farther view of the Propagation of the Gospel, as a *Fact*, we must now enter upon some farther considerations relative to the *solution* of that fact. That is, we must consider whether Christianity could have been spread in the manner described, if at least the Gospel History had not been *true*.—And here, our thoughts must turn upon the *difficulties*, humanly speaking, attending such an advancement of such a Religion, so circumstanced. If those difficulties cannot be conceived to have been surmountable by human means, the Religion must have been divine: at least, it must have been *thought* divine by those who embraced it; how likely they were to be *deceived* in such a case, may be a subsequent inquiry.

17. *Difficulties* attending the propagation of the Gospel, would be either on the part of the *Hearers*, or of the *Teachers*.

Difficulties on the part of the *Hearers* might arise from their *prejudices*, their *interests*, the *bodily pains* they would have to endure, or from their *vices*. While we enumerate these, in some imperfect way, we must endeavour to suppose ourselves *actually concerned*, either as those who had to persuade others, or as those who were to be persuaded to take a very important step; on the liveliness of our conceptions will depend the force, or the effect at least, of the argument.—And, to give us lively and distinct ideas is the principal use of the descriptions, which have been now given of the fact.

18. When you want to remove a *prejudice*, it is very difficult to gain any attention; ‘you may talk,’ says a prejudiced man, ‘but you shall never persuade *me*.’—And, when men are much prejudiced, they lose their sense of their being prejudiced at all; prejudice,



prejudice, in this respect, resembles insanity; and therefore, as it increases, it grows more difficult to cure on *two accounts*; both because the disease grows stronger, and because the patient becomes less disposed to accept a remedy. In common cases, men are unwilling to give up their prejudices, because it is humiliating to confess, that they have not been under the guidance of reason. Prejudice becomes more difficult to remove, when it gets mixed with respect; for then it is a species of *virtue*: if it gets linked with religious veneration and devotion, it is a species of *piety*: religious prejudices are the strongest of all, because our religious ideas of the Divine nature and heavenly things, must be *indistinct*; and, where reason has less power, prejudice must have more.—Pliny the younger, and Julian, as already described, are striking instances of the force of religious prejudice\*. And, in the 17th Century, we of this nation had an instance of the great difficulty of overcoming prejudice, when King Charles I. attempted to force the English form of ecclesiastical government on the Scotch Church. I would not take for granted, that the English Form is best; but only that either of them might be admitted, in compliance with civil authority†.—When Truth is to be pressed upon the prejudiced, it seems difficult to know what mode to adopt: if you are remiss, you have no effect; if you are severe, you exasperate and revolt‡.—  
The

\* I here read (see Sect. 6.) some passages from *Libanius's* Oration for the *Temples*, and the petition for replacing the *Altar of Victory*. Translations of both may be found in Lardner's Works by the *Indexes*. His account of *Zosimus* affords good Instances.

† This is what Dr. Powell proves in his Thesis.

‡ Professor Bullet says, "In the last Century, the Chinese, it is well known, chose rather to lose their heads than to cut off their long hair." p. 116. by Salisbury.

The Jews, we know, were very strongly prejudiced; and what has been said in the present Chapter may shew, that the Gentiles were not less so: the calumnies, which were spread abroad about Christians, would add strength to the prejudices of both.

19. The *Interests* of those, to whom the Gospel was preached, would make it very difficult for the preachers to succeed; indeed interest raises a strong *prejudice* against any opinions, which seem to threaten it, but we will wave that at present. It is a dreary and melancholy thing to fall from a state of affluence or plenty, to one of indigence; or, in general, from an higher condition to a lower: to live in a daily, hourly, perpetual disappointment, with regard to those accommodations, indulgencies, (luxuries if you please) of which one has, from habit, a constant expectation: not only to have all hope of rising cut off, but to feel continual mortification (heightened by the triumphs of enemies or rivals) from a sense of falling. Men express things as they feel them; and such a change as this therefore gets the name of *ruin*, &c.—And, though some romantic people may look forward to a low estate, and indulge fond imaginations that they shall be happy in it, yet, I believe, the best judges of human nature hold, that poverty, unknown and untried before, wears\* out the strength and vigour of the mind, and of the whole human constitution. The evil may be perhaps an evil of the *imagination*, and might be relieved by good moral expedients; but, if it is to be expected, that it will be a real evil, no matter from what part of human nature it proceeds.—Poverty indeed, to be a difficulty in the present case, must be dreaded as one; it commonly is dreaded too much; yet it is to be accounted a *real* evil:—if a few Enthusiasts rush into it, the evils they

\* Diderot, *Fils Naturel*, Act 4 Scene 2.



they find warn others; and, in general, a man who knows the world, would rather have any difficulty in the way of his proposal, especially amongst men who were industrious in different occupations, than be obliged to tell them, that they could not accept his proposal, without reducing themselves to poverty. Nay, the prospect of ruin is often considered as a sufficient apology for actions confessedly *wrong*.

As to our persuading men to do any thing, which would occasion them great *bodily pain*, the difficulty is too evident to need much explanation; it is very great, but very obvious: the sensibility of human nature to bodily pain, is very strong; perhaps the apprehension of future, may, at any moment, be a greater evil than the actual sensation; but that makes nothing against us.—Our argument here must depend on any person's conceiving and representing to himself some particular case, of some exquisite bodily torments inflicted in such a manner, that the sufferer could at any time escape, by complying with ceremonies expressive of the opinions of his persecutors: we know, that the minds of men, and of women, unused to pain, *faint* under such sufferings. Insomuch that a person, who makes use of them, would be said to use *violence, compulsion, &c.*—terms which imply, that all choice, freedom, &c. are overborn. It is therefore much more surprising if they do not, than if they do, in such a situation, renounce all claim to distant and invisible rewards.—What is called the *Torture*, has generally proved successful; while the body is on the rack, and can be any moment relieved by compliance, distant and unknown rewards appear visionary and romantic. The Christians generally yielded, in some degree, to persecution; in Pliny's time we know \* they did: though perhaps, in private,

\* Sect. 13. of this Chapter.

vate, their cause might gain strength by oppression, as but few out of the whole number sunk under it; and as impartial spectators must be interested in favour of those, who suffered wrongfully, by the mere force of humanity.—Mr. *Addison*, in his *Evidences*, &c. has \* a strong passage on this subject.

20. The *last* difficulty, on the part of those to whom Christianity was addressed, which I shall mention, is that arising from their having indulged † *vicious habits*. I do not mean, that any difficulties are absolutely unfurmountable; for all those that I mention were actually overcome; but, if it was not at all likely that they should be overcome, some great power or influence is manifested when they are. Suppose then you were to set about preaching holiness to the vicious, or were to exhort those to learn to do well, who had been accustomed to do evil? “Can the *Æthiopian* change his skin, or the † *Leopard* his spots?”—With what probability shall we attempt to give a man perfect sobriety of character, who has an inveterate habit of drinking strong liquors?—or to purify the Heart of a common *Prostitute*?—We may sometimes hope, that we have reclaimed him, who has an habit of speaking falsehood, from lying and slandering; or prevailed upon the pilferer to keep his hands from picking and stealing; but, when we come to trust them, we find they relapse, and make us feel contemptible to ourselves for placing any confidence in them. In the case of Idolaters, some vicious habits got confirmed by Religion; but, independent of that, vice in general, and sensuality in particular, benumbs the finer feelings, and sears those § nerves, which,

\* vii. 4. quoted by Lardner, Works, Vol. 7. p. 437.

† *Prejudice* is an habit, but of the *intellectual* sort; we now speak chiefly of *moral* habits.

‡ Jer. xiii. 23. § 1 Tim. iv. 2. Eph. iv. 19.



which, in the good, are made to thrill and vibrate, by every generous act of virtue, by every instance of rational piety.

Though these difficulties are great when single, they are much greater when *united*; which they often are: at least, those who first laboured to propagate the Christian religion, would often find *prejudice, interest, and vice* combined against them; so that, in order to their success, they must change men from prejudiced to unprejudiced, from selfish to disinterested; from slaves of habit, to free servants of God: they must have to make the Æthiopian fair, the Leopard unspotted: and the convert, in whom prejudice, interest, and vice had been combined, before his conversion, might have moreover no very distant prospect of being called to endure *bodily pain*. When a convert underwent such changes, it was indeed like being *born again*.

We see then what prospect we should have, in the ordinary course of things, of prevailing upon a Roman to give up the protection of Jupiter Capitolinus, and openly declare a contempt of his Godhead before a Magistrate: or to abjure all the mysteries of Bacchus and Venus.— We see what madness it would be in us, as common men, to attempt the conversion of Ægypt, by reviling Serapis, Isis, and Osiris; or by arguing against Devotions offered to an Onion, a Cat, or a Crocodile!

21. But it might be useful not only to suppose cases, but to study that which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles\*; as that shews us, in a very lively manner, the effects of the combined forces of prejudice, Interest, and Habits. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” “the Image which fell down from Jupiter!”—“that the Temple of the Great Goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence

\* Acts Chap. xix.

magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth!" Such were the words of the *Artists*, who provided the worshippers of Diana with Shrines, and other things; they were not only afraid for their Interest, they were zealous also for the Honour of their Goddess: so at least they fancied: the Jews wanted to be distinguished from Christians; Paul, they urged, was not of their sect; they called out Alexander to explain this matter; but, as soon as the Multitude knew that he was one of those, who were so impious as to say, that they were no Gods, which were made with hands, they "with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"—What think you now of making these *Craftsmen*, these Artists and Workmen, give up their gain, and this people their great Goddess? In fact, these things were afterwards given up; but that is the change, which is so unaccountable: the Christian Council at the same City of Ephesus, in the year 431, consisted of two \* hundred Bishops, and an innumerable company of Christians of different ranks;—but, that it should be so, will appear the more strange, the more we consider what myriads of artists, statuaries, painters, silversmiths, besides priests, victim-sellers, and others, must be what would be called *injured, ruined, &c.* by the establishment of a spiritual Religion; these were amongst the most determined enemies of Christianity, and from these came probably most of the informations against Christians, and perhaps many calumnies.

22. Such must have been the difficulties on the part of the hearers, in bringing about the Fact above described, the Propagation of the Gospel; supposing the Teachers qualified in the best manner

\* Cave's Hist. Lit.



ner possible. Now, we will suppose the hearers such as would occasion the fewest difficulties, and see what difficulties must arise on the part of the *Teachers*.—Here we must observe, that the first teachers of Christianity *set out* with professing, that they \* were commissioned to convert the *whole world*, and this profession was soon published;—how could such a thought enter the mind of such a set of men as these?—fishermen, mechanics, without riches, power, art, eloquence, learning, or even (as was † said before) a spirit of fanaticism!—to conceive the difficulties which such teachers must have, first imagine them to begin their preaching *in our own Country*: Let a Master of a fishing-vessel or two, at Yarmouth, get some companions of his own rank, and let them proclaim, that they mean to have *all Nations* come over to their Religion; let some attempt to stop those, who are in the career of *pleasure*; others those, who are warm in *ambitious* pursuits; what success would they have, even supposing them to persevere? let others address themselves to plain prudent men in the middle ranks of Life, supported by some occupation, exhorting them to leave their counters, and enter upon a new Religion; the Head indeed of the Religion had been executed as a criminal some years ago, but he had commissioned his servants to teach, and would come in Glory, and reward them hereafter; nothing was to be gained till after death, every thing here was to be given up, or hazarded:—would the success in this rank be better than in the higher?

Nor was there anything particularly favourable in the times when Christianity was published; from what has been said of Gentilism and Judaism, the difficulties would not be less under them; the  
teachers

\* Matt. xxviii. 19—Mar. xvi. 15.

† Sect. 2.

teachers of Christianity had nothing to make compensation to the Heathens for the loss of their pleasurable worship, nor to the Jews for giving them a Carpenter's Son for their Messiah, instead of a King to sit literally on the Throne of David, and procure for them universal Dominion. Such teachers would be despicable to the Heathens merely by being Jews; especially if Philosophers opposed them;—and to the Jews they would be odious, because they would address them as the murderers of that very person, whose religion they exhorted them to embrace.—Teachers under these disadvantages go to Rome, Athens, Jerusalem!—they attempt the *whole world*: consider of what the *world* \* *consists*, of what variety of tempers, manners, principles! surely the difficulties, merely on the part of the *Teachers*, must appear insuperable.

23. Having then offered † farther thoughts upon the *fact*, and upon the *solution* of that fact, we come to see what *conclusions* may be drawn.—First we may say, in general, if such difficulties attended the publication of Christianity as could not naturally be surmounted, and yet were surmounted; there must have been some supernatural power active in its publication. Indeed, when we say difficulties could not naturally be surmounted, we speak only on a footing of the strongest probability; how likely it was, that such difficulties could be overcome by natural means, every one must judge for himself; I suppose no one would hazard the least part of his worldly interest upon the success of such means.—And, when we say there must have been some supernatural power, we need not be understood to speak of any thing beyond  
Miracles,

\* Salisbury's Bullet. p. 116.

† For plan, see Sect. 5.



Miracles and Prophecies.—If any persons were converted by arguments taken from miracles and prophecies, I should say, that he was converted by supernatural means:—still more if by continued miracles, or the supernatural influence of God upon his Heart: on any of these three \* suppositions, the Religion published must be *true*.

But we may say, more particularly, one of the three following conclusions must be rightly drawn from what has been said. Either 1. the Christian Religion is true—or, 2. the teachers of it believed it false.—or 3. they believed it true, but were deceived. If we can throw out the two last suppositions, we of course establish the first.

24. Can it be believed, that the Teachers of Christianity thought it a false religion?—That a set of men, without prospect of worldly advantages, should set about an undertaking, which must take up their whole lives, the teaching of a Religion which they themselves did not believe to be true, seems a notion beyond the reach of the most flighty Scepticism. They exposed themselves to losses and persecutions; possibly they might have to suffer Death itself; and what could they expect? preaching this falshood was to be their employment for Life; after this Life, they had nothing to expect but severe punishment for their deceit and hypocrisy.

25. We cannot suppose the first preachers of Christianity to have believed their Religion to be true, if it had been false; because the principles of it, speculative or moral, were not particularly adapted to their rank and manner of Life: Christian principles were too strict, humble, disinterested; and too refined. Then, as to the Miracles, they  
were

\* Sect. 3. & 4.

were as good judges of them, as any men could be; one sees no way, in which they could be deceived about them.—They continued a length of time in a course of examining evidence: they had no temptations to deceive themselves: they searched the ancient Scriptures, heard prophecies explained by the event. And it seems probable, that they never fixed their principles of action, till after the Ascension of Christ: and then, that they fixed them upon a *review* of all circumstances, and upon mature *reflection*. And, supposing the very first teachers had taken error for truth, yet by the next set the error would have been detected. The facts and doctrines had nothing to make them accepted in any age, but their appearing to be true; and, at first, there was nothing to make them appear true, but their being true; there was nothing to set them off in false colours.

If then the Gospel could not have been preached by those who thought it false; and if those, who preached it, could judge of it so as not to be deceived, what conclusion can we draw, but that *the Gospel is true* \*?

26. But it may be said, the religion of Mohammed spread rapidly, is it therefore true?—we answer, the mere spreading of a Religion does not prove its truth, if it is spread by human means; or by any means, by which it might be propagated, supposing it false —The Religion of Mohammed, we are told, was propagated by Arms; we have no reason to think success by arms an infallible proof of the Divine approbation, because wickedness has prospered by arms; in some sense, all events may be referred to God's government, (the Tyrant is his

\* Here might be introduced that fine passage of Chrysostom, quoted by Lardner, near conclusion of *Art. Chrysostom. Works*, Vol. 5. p. 151, 152. No. 5 and 6.



his scourge, the Fire his minister) but the manner, in which such reference is made, must be explained when we hereafter treat of Predestination.—As to miracles, the Mohammedan teachers did not pretend to them; except in the delivery of the Koran to their Prophet; and, with regard to that, they argue in a circle; proving the excellence of the Koran, by its having been miraculously delivered; and the miracle of its delivery, (which was in private) by the excellence of the Koran\*.

27. Again, some sects have spread rapidly without force of arms†; but such have always come to nothing ere long, and, whilst they subsisted, might be accounted for; by an enthusiastic spirit, favoured by some peculiar incidents; or in some other human way; particularly, perhaps, by a want of religious instruction from those, who had taken upon them the charge of giving it, but who were settled at their ease, and had turned their minds to other objects, in consequence, probably, of some growing customs, which had prevented their ever gaining a right idea of their Duties. For the mind of man requires religious nourishment; and, if such nourishment be not duly administered, an appetite is excited for it, sometimes one so strong, as to take any food that is offered, rather than none. The account given by Pliny, marks a great calmness and sobriety of virtue and piety in the Christians of his time; and a perfect freedom from enthusiasm: indeed we may say, in general, that the spirit of Christianity kept diffusing itself equably;—though constantly,

\* Professor White's Bampton Lectures are so generally read, that it is needless to enlarge upon this objection. Any one might also consult Mr. Bryant's Treatise, p. 188—203.

† See Leland's View of Deistical Writers, Letter 14. Vol. 1. p. 230. Chubb compares the spreading of Methodism to the spreading of Christianity.

constantly, yet quietly; it kept rising from the lower ranks to the higher; and gradually found its way into the understandings and affections of the most improved and eminent.

Thus we may answer this objection; but we can do more; we can turn it against the enemies of Christianity, and make it very powerful. To think of the number of founders of Religions pretending to divine authority, of those who have professed to be the Messiah promised to the Jews; of the number of Lawgivers, and moralists, who have figured in the world for a time; and to reflect upon the manner, in which their credit has declined and died away, whilst that of Jesus has flourished in the most improved countries, and seems likely to be more flourishing hereafter than ever it has been hitherto; is a very strong confirmation of the other arguments, which are urged in its favour.—Professor \* *Bullet* has set this matter in a strong light.

28. It has appeared, that the subject before us is very *extensive*, and therefore it may be proper to mark the extent of it, as far as can easily be done. To understand the propagation of the Gospel well, we should be acquainted with matters relating to Heathens, Jews, and Christians.—We should understand the Heathen religious rites, the attachment of the Heathens to their Religion, the nature of their toleration; their government, and their Laws, written and unwritten; their opinions, and sects.—With regard to the Jews, we should understand their History, from their first separation down to the Destruction of their Temple; their dispersion, and settlements; and their notions, received traditions, and expectations. Of Christian concerns we should also have a knowledge; such as Church-government, assemblies, ceremonies, mo-  
rals,

\* P. 140, by Salisbury,



als, reputation. All which we cannot understand without knowing the views of the Authors, who mention those subjects, their characters and connexions; with the languages in which they write, to which may be added Geography and Chronology. —The extent of the subject is here mentioned, in order to shew, that both arguments and objections should be offered with modesty and diffidence, when we treat of it.

29. The *utility* of studying this subject seems great. The argument from facts seems likely to weigh more, with the generality, than such arguments as depend upon criticism; or than those taken from the obscurities of prophecy. Besides, every incident makes us more interested in the cause of Christianity; and a series of interesting events generates in our minds an affection for our religion. And, if the events are not miraculous, we adopt them with the less hesitation; we have no doubts or scruples about believing them; and, for that reason, they have a greater effect upon our Hearts\*.

30. Lastly, we should distinguish between the Propagation of the Gospel, as *proving* the reality of the

\* These thoughts may appear better in the following order. The *utility* of studying the Propagation of the Gospel consists in its strengthening our *Faith*, and interesting our *Hearts* in the cause of Christianity. Our *Faith* is strengthened by the Propagation of the Gospel, as a strong proof of the truth of Christianity, and as a proof in which the generality readily acquiesce. *Miracles* and *Prophecies*, in right circumstances, are valid proofs; but they amaze, and, having been sometimes feigned, they raise a degree of doubt or perplexity; but the propagation of the Gospel seems a train of facts, shewing what must follow from examining the evidences of Christianity: of facts level to an ordinary understanding. —Moreover, nothing could interest the heart more than a continued attention to this train of facts: if a fictitious fable (*μυθος*) interests us, what must the History of early Christians do (allowances made for the times) in which facts occur so striking, that no one durst insert them in a fictitious narrative.

the Gospel miracles, and as explaining the *design*\* of God in those miracles, taking their reality for granted:—The distinction has been made † before, but we had not then seen the manner, in which the Christian religion was promulged. We can now say, If we had only the promulgation of the Gospel to render the miracles of the New Testament credible, if the records of those testimonies, which have before ‡ been produced, had perished; if we had only received a plain narrative or catalogue of the miracles, we should have sufficient ground for believing them. But, if we have proof of the New Testament miracles, independent of the Promulgation of the Gospel, then we can say, that the promulgation of the Gospel, or the conversion of the world from Idolatry, was the final cause of those miracles; or, that the promulgation of the Gospel explains their *design* and meaning.

But, when we say, that we believe it to have been the design of God to convert the world by miracles, though we know that what he intends must be executed, yet we need not conclude, that every miracle compels mechanically the assent of every man; this is a part of the business, which we do not see; we know not *how* God influences and superintends voluntary actions; but we conceive, in general, in the ordinary course of things, that miracles do convince, or, in the present case, convert;—when *Alfred* founded seminaries of Learning, it was natural for those, to whom nothing had been explained, to conclude, that the final cause of such foundations was, to improve the minds of the people:—we conclude, from the make of the bones in which the eye is placed, that the final cause of their formation was, to protect the eye: in all our opinions of this sort, there may possibly be some error, there

\* Powell, Disc. vii. p. 112, 113. † Chap. xvi. Sect. 9.

‡ Chap. xvi.



there will always be much imperfection, yet, humanly speaking, we may say, they are well-grounded.

The design of God, when sufficiently apparent, might afford us a motive to co-operate; to contribute towards accomplishing such design;—as members of universities might be helped in their motives to do their duty, by attending to the design of Alfred. Yet it is sometimes dangerous to take for granted, that we are *certainly* executing the plans of the Supreme Being; it is like presuming to know the mind of the Lord, and fancying that we have been his Counsellors;—but all well-grounded opinions concerning final causes, are foundations of good sentiments and principles; and those arising from studying the Propagation of the Gospel, must greatly strengthen our Christian Faith, and enliven our devout affections,



## C H A P. XIX.

## OF THE NEED WHICH MEN HAVE OF REVELATION.

1. **I**F we look back to the short *Analysis* of proofs of the Christian Religion, contained in the 12th Chapter, we shall perceive, that the *last* proof is the *need* which men had, and still have, of Revelation. I have classed it as an external proof; Bishop Gibson (near the end of his second pastoral Letter) mentions it as an internal one. I presume this difference is not important. We have before us a spiritual disease, and its remedy; if our views are fixed upon the disease, and the proof occurs to our mind, we shall conceive it to be external; if our views are fixed upon the nature of the remedy, that remedy being inherent in the Christian Religion, we shall estimate the proof as internal.

To whatever class our present argument may belong, it is one, which should be used with modesty and *caution*; the danger is, lest, while we say men have need of Revelation, and therefore God gave it, we should fancy ourselves in the place of God, and able to judge of his *plans* and designs. It is presumption in us to say, God determined not to allow this evil, God provided this remedy: we must not say any thing, which implies blame in God, either for leaving men at any time to their natural faculties, or for supplying them with supernatural helps; as we know not the reasons, on which infinite wisdom interferes with general Laws, or suffers them to take their course.—Nor, when we are most inclined to conclude, that God provides a remedy



medy for an evil, must we affirm, that he forces that remedy on those who want it, or that he does nothing extraordinary, in order to gain it acceptance.

When we see moral improvement actually take place, in such a manner that we judge it may be ascribed to the Gospel, we may then think ourselves more secure: but here again some diffidence is necessary: improvements in arts and sciences, and in various regulations of social intercourse, might possibly bring on improvements in manners; though it ought to be acknowledged, on the other hand, that, in any Christian country, even arts, sciences, and Laws may have owed their improvements to Christianity;—candour, gentleness, a peaceful spirit, would naturally encourage industry and ingenuity, as well as every kind of useful regulation; and nothing could promote such a disposition more than the Christian Religion.

Though Dr. Powell seems to have intended to make a set of discourses for the instruction of the younger students in Divinity, he does not appear to have treated this subject: but many eminent writers have\*: and the *Founder* of this Lecture has particularly mentioned it, as one of the subjects which he wishes to have insisted on.

2. But, though we ought to be very cautious of putting ourselves in the place of the Supreme Being; yet we can never be too well acquainted with the *facts*, which seem to throw light on our subject, nor with the *nature and tendency* of mere Philosophy, or of the Christian Revelation. Let us therefore treat our subject in this simple way: let us enumerate the faults and defects of Religion and morality among the Heathens; and afterwards consider the

\* Bishop Butler, Bishop Gibson (2d Past. Letter.) Bishop Law, Dr. Samuel Clarke. See *Locke* and *Whitby* mentioned, Leland, p. 21. Vol. 1. not to mention foreigners, or ancients.

the *tendency* of *Philosophy*, and also of the *Christian Religion*, to correct those faults, and supply those defects; this will not be putting ourselves in the *place* of God, or judging how far the same good ends might be answered by other means; how far God has intended to control the choice of man, by causing the Christian Religion to be professed as it is; nor how far the improvements, which have taken place, are owing to Christianity; that is, how far it has *actually* remedied those evils, which it has a *tendency* to remedy.—Such diffidence will not stifle our religious gratitude:—in all cases, when we have received good from any dispensation of Providence, we ought to dwell on the particulars; such reflection will generate gratitude, though we do not peremptorily determine the designs of God in every particular:—nay, when we have suffered by any Dispensation, if we reflect on particulars with a pious mind, the unfavourable events will generate humility, and other good sentiments; but this by the way: when we see evils, which Christianity has a tendency to remedy, and which it seems to have remedied in part, though we cannot draw our conclusion as in a mathematical Demonstration, yet we may reasonably establish a strong probable presumption in its favour; nay, one as strong as those, which we think it prudent to *act* from, in many important worldly concerns: and one therefore, from which we may reasonably act in the concerns of religion.

3. But, before we proceed to enumerate the evils and defects, which Christianity had a tendency to remedy, it will be proper to conceive in our minds how men *might* possibly have improved, or continued in ignorance and Barbarism, *without* Revelation: such conceptions will afford us a kind of *Standard*, to which we may refer any actual faults  
and



and defects, and by which we may, as it were, measure their *quantity* or *degree*.

If man had no guidance from Revelation, he must guide himself by *experience*; by making a variety of trials, his knowledge of good and evil would gradually improve, as would his facility of doing things beneficial: what a man has consumed a long time in acquiring, he may often \* communicate in a short time; and this extends to practical arts in some degree:—and, as morality is nothing but a set of rules, adapted to promote happiness, social and private, established and recognized by the moral sense; and, as these rules must arise from experience, the observation must extend to morality. The constitution of our nature, with regard to habits, must help forward improvement, both in things natural and moral; for, as arts and moral duties grow easier by becoming habitual, the faculties of body and mind can enter upon new fields of action, and multiply the objects, on which they may exercise themselves, as well as increase their own efficacy by such exercise. Particularly, it seems as if *Industry* and *Temperance* might receive gradual improvements by an attentive experience; and these are the two virtues chiefly instrumental in improving mankind; industry creating new enjoyments, and temperance refining them, and drawing men gradually from the more gross and vulgar, to the more pure and noble. It is scarce needful to say, that, under Industry, is included application of the mind; and the mind, when simple, sincere, and calm, yet active and persevering, can invent, multiply, vary, and, at the same time, regulate, embellish, improve means of happiness without end. And, by supposing men, as they thus advance, to refer every thing they observe, to the  
great

\* Chap. i. Sect. 3.

great First Cause, we may conceive them gradually to acquire competent notions of *Religion*.

4. Let us now take a different view, and consider how mankind, destitute of Revelation, *might* get confirmed in ignorance, barbarism, and *depravity*.—Mere inexperience, or ignorance of good and evil, does not strike our moral faculty so as to excite disapprobation or abhorrence; but, if men were in such a state, and did not improve, they would get into a state, which would be worse:—they must have some gratifications, and they would be apt to seize upon the most obvious, which are the lowest. There are more ways of getting wrong, than of keeping right; there are two vicious extremes to one virtuous mean. Men slide into vice without effort, but do not recover themselves without strong exertions. Ignorance, when men give themselves up to it, will confine them to animal, groveling indulgences; and animal gratifications will lessen the pleasure of instruction, or give a disgust for mental application. Habits have here too their influence, and serve to fix and settle men in depravity: persons so situated soon lose all sense of any thing above their own state, all consciousness of the slavery to vice, under which they labour: succeeding generations inherit savage manners, without any idea of their being avoidable, or out of the natural course of things.—The principal faculties, which distinguish men from Brutes, are unknown, or little attended to; Science, though within reach, is hid, and not thought of; enjoyments of the noblest sort, like gems under the surface of the earth, lie neglected, though it is always possible to procure and polish them: the Supreme Being, appearing only as the cause of evils, which no one endeavours to remedy, is an object of terror,  
if



if not of hatred: rational and affectionate worship of him never once occurs to the mind.

5. There is one thing, relating to this state of depravity, which seems to require being mentioned separately; and that is, that man, in such a state, must be conceived to incur the *displeasure* of God. —Man is accountable for his actions; God is the Judge of all the earth;—our being given up to a reprobate mind, or depraved affections and vicious habits, does not exempt us from *punishment*; these are truths, but need not now be proved; the mention of them seems to be a necessary part of a description of a state of depravity; the proof should be offered, when it can be insisted on, and treated at large. Yet this may be a good opportunity for taking notice of the expression, the *displeasure of God*, as it is one, which has occasioned dispute, and is much more philosophical than at first it may seem to be, and as the apprehension of punishment makes a considerable part of our present subject. The ancient heathen Philosophers seem to have held, that the Gods were \* incapable of anger, or of hurting any one; and our Church holds, in its first Article, that God is without passions; on the other hand, Lactantius† endeavours to prove, that God is angry, literally speaking. Origen‡, in his  
fourth

\* See Cic. de Off. Lib. iii. Sect. 28, 29. Edit. Pearce. In Sect. 28, he seems only to speak in the character of an Objector; but in Sect. 29, his reasoning implies what is here affirmed. In Sect. 28, the notion, that Jupiter is never angry, appears to have been common to all Philosophers.

† De Irâ. See also Theophilus of Antioch.

‡ See Spencer's Index, "*Dei Ira*." or p. 211. Spencer's Edition.

Οργην μὲν ἐν ὀνομαζόμεν θεῷ ὁ παθὼς δ' αὐτῇ αὐτὴν εἶναι φάμεν, ἀλλὰ τι παραλαμβάνομεν εἰς τὴν διὰ σκυθρωπότερων ἀγωγῶν παιδεύειν τοὺς τὰ τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἡμαρτηκοσί. We call it the *Anger* of God, but we do not say, that it is any *passion* of his, but a *something* used for the purposes of discipline, when the more severe kind of methods are to be used against great offenders.

fourth Book against Celsus, gives a sensible account of the matter;—but what I would principally observe is, that, when we speak of the displeasure of God, we do not undertake to determine what is really the nature of that displeasure in the Divine mind, but only to describe it, as nearly as we are able, by comparison with what we know and observe amongst ourselves. That is ascribed to displeasure in God, which would be the effect of displeasure in man. And this is the case with every quality of the Divine Nature; Knowledge, Power, goodness, prescience, Will, and so forth; we do not know what these are in themselves, but, when certain effects would be ascribed to them respectively in man, then, if the effects are from God, we ascribe them to similar causes in the divine mind. The displeasure of God then means only the cause, in the Divine mind, of those effects, which, if they came from man, would be attributed to displeasure. According to this, the Heathens were right in not allowing men to take for granted anger in the Divine mind, exactly of the same sort with human anger; and wrong in concluding, that no effects were to be expected similar to the effects of anger in man. Lactantius was right in maintaining the reality of such effects; but wrong, seemingly, in taking for granted, that punishment must imply wrath of God in a literal sense, exactly of the same kind with anger in man.—Origen was right, both as to diffidence about the *Nature* of Displeasure in the Divine mind, and as to the reality and certainty of its *effects*.

There might be intermediate degrees of improvement or depravity, between the two extremes, described in Sect. 3 and 4.

6. We may now proceed to enumerate \* the faults and defects of Religion amongst the Heathens; after

\* According to Sect. 2. of this Chapter.



after which, we will consider the *tendency* of the Christian Religion to remedy them.

The Heathens certainly ran into many important *errors*, with regard to Religion and Morals.

They practised openly many *vices*.

They had not sufficient ground to expect *remission* of punishment.

They had not a provision for the religious and moral improvement of the *People*; of the generality of mankind.

We have already seen something of Heathen *Errors*, in the course of the preceding Chapter. All Idolatry is a capital error: and all worship of Demons, Heavenly bodies, Brutes, departed Heroes. Impurity in religious rites, and human sacrifices, are built on error. And, even when the Heathens thought of a Deity independently of matter, they ran into various errors concerning his Attributes, and his Government: not all into the same error, but each error wanted correcting, whoever professed it.

They erred also concerning the nature of the soul, and its immortality; and a future judgment; indeed any defect in them, taken collectively, might be reckoned here, as well as any error held by a part, such as that concerning Fate, or that relating to the transmigration of souls.

7. The Heathens ran, without scruple, into the commission of many *Vices*: such we may reckon Revenge, enslaving Captives, exposing children, Suicide; community of wives, fornication, Sodomy, Abortion\*, Incest.—This might be in part owing to *error*, but moral errors, by which the Heathens were induced to commit any *vices*, may be mentioned here.

8. That

\* See Bishop Gibson's second pastoral Letter. Grotius on Rom. i. 26, &c.

8. That they had no sufficient ground to expect *remission* of punishment, will appear more particularly hereafter. Their *Lustrations* or expiatory sacrifices, *ἱλαστικά*, shewed their want of such a thing.

9. That they made no provision for the *People*, as to religious instruction, seems also evident: we are so accustomed to have the *People* taught the Truths of Religion, in consequence of a provision made by legislative authority, that we have no idea of their being wholly neglected; of their seeking for religious instruction in vain: the whole number of teachers of Duties was so \* small, that, supposing them to be evenly dispersed, and every man to have liberty of attending them, it would astonish any one to calculate the distance, upon an average, to which a person must go, in order to be instructed:—then, only the *rich* were instructed by any Philosophers, and Philosophers were not looked upon, like our Clergy, as under obligation to practice what they taught; to set any example: moreover, there was no unity of Doctrine amongst them, no System. In the Temples, there were no Instructions or exhortations whatsoever: nor was there any Book corresponding to our *Bible*, containing precepts, hymns, narrations, which the people might peruse and think of, at any hours which they chose to dedicate to Religion. No authority of any kind seems to have so much as attempted any plan for the information of the *People*, relative to the Interests of another Life.

10. This enumeration of evils and defects may be sufficient: but, before we speak of the tendency of the Christian Religion to remedy them, we should reflect upon them, and consider how unlikely they were to be remedied without revelation; by mere Philosophy.

11. Mere

\* Bishop Gibson, *ib.*



11. Mere Philosophers would find it a *difficult* and *dangerous* task to convince men of moral and religious *Errors*; dangerous even to the public. The task would be difficult, because moral and religious opinions are particularly abstruse\*. It is much more likely, that men should rectify an erroneous notion about a Rainbow, or about Vortices†, than about things so liable to cavil and sophistry, as some parts of morals and Religion; and so nearly affecting conduct, about which men are apt to be fore. Moreover, men are most strongly prejudiced in favour of what they reverence; they are the least apt to question what they much respect. The attachment of such men as the younger Pliny and the Emperor Julian to Idolatry, is a phenomenon well worth mentioning repeatedly.

The task would be *dangerous* to the public, perhaps sometimes to Philosophers themselves, because, when you take away men's moral and religious principles, you cannot immediately substitute others in their room, with all the strength of habits, sentiments, affections, and moral sense, which have had a gradual increase: and any virtue is better than none; the worst Religion is better than a total want ‡ of Religion. The virtue of a Savage, for instance, is chiefly military, or intimately connected with military; convince him, at once, that he ought not to glory in his military exploits, or boast the number of his scalps, and you leave him unprincipled.—Nay, I know not whether suddenly extirpating the notion, that children may be exposed, if they are likely to become disgraceful or burthensome to the state, might not have endangered, at some times, the love of Country, or the spirit of Patriotism.

\* Dr. Balguy. Charge 5. p. 258 8vo.

† Keil's Astronomy, Index; or p. 201.

‡ Dr. Balguy. Charge 5. p. 258. 8vo.

Patriotism. If you take away an old Pillar, and are not very expert at substituting a new one, the whole fabric comes down. And, as to *Religion*, such wise men as Socrates and Cicero, you will say, might have destroyed Idolatry; they did not; but suppose them to have done it, by reasoning and ridicule, and you must conceive the people, at that time, irreligious; all those sentiments thrown into confusion, which had for their object superior Beings, as the protectors, benefactors, judges, rewarders, punishers of mankind\*. If, indeed, something rational could be immediately substituted, the change would be for the better; but Philosophers would get into disputes and controversies; and these being very intricate, would only serve to fill the minds of men with doubts, and painful perplexity.

12. Now, as to *Vices*, there is an intimate connexion between wrong practical opinions, and vices; the word *sentiment* stands sometimes for opinion, and sometimes for that feeling, which immediately impels to action; and is considered as a part of active virtue or vice. But our business now is, to consider how unequal mere Philosophy is to make men abhor and forsake their vices, when acknowledged † as such. Indeed, supposing moral errors rectified, then all vices would be acknowledged as vices. Now, to conquer vicious habits, requires very great force; greater than philosophy can boast. Men, sunk in brutal sensuality and indolence, contract an insensibility about excelling, and a disgust  
or

\* The *sentiments* are much the *same*, though the *objects* are different; Gods are always superior, invisible, powerful, rewarders, punishers, &c.

† Men may commit vices through wrong opinions, not accounting them vices; correcting these would be rather correcting *errors* than vices.



or contempt for instruction, and for all refined pleasure. It is only some great shock, some powerful caustic, which can rouse them from their stupidity. And, if they for a while attempt to practise some human virtues, they are apt to relapse into their former brutality: the proverb mentioned by St. Peter\* is but too often applicable, and has probably been introduced by some idea of the lowness of men's sensuality: "The Dog is returned to his own vomit again; and the Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." The Truth of this can only appear by experience.

To forsake vice must imply to embrace *Virtue*; to bring the moral sense to approve things really excellent†, and disapprove things really base and pernicious. But, I apprehend, our moral sense is generated by degrees; and therefore if you could weaken men's attachment to certain indulgences, you could not immediately make them love what you set before them as virtues; nor, in like manner, could you at once make them abhor and detest what you set before them as vices. To do this, requires some influence more than natural: mere man, if he takes to pieces the moral sense, cannot immediately new fashion it, and give it its usual energy.

When any men have persuaded themselves, or have taken for granted, that Philosophy might reform men's manners, they have probably taken detached expressions of Philosophers, without comparing them with others of a different tendency;—these expressions, say they, must, if duly attended to, make men love virtue, hope for a future state, &c.—here, because they pay no regard to opposite passages, they take for granted no one else will;—but the persons in question would be suspended  
between

\* 2 Pet. ii. 22. † Phil. i. 10.

between opposite authorities : however great one authority may be, another equally great may destroy all its efficacy : and it requires as much strength of mind, or nearly, to determine amidst contending arguments, as to invent the truth originally.—Perhaps no sect affirmed the reality of a future state so positively as the Epicureans denied it.

But, in forsaking vices, the Heathens had not only human authorities to reconcile, but *divine*.—Gods might protect virtues, but Gods also protected vices; if men were to be induced to hold in low esteem the divine protection given to vices, it could not well fail but they must esteem lightly also the divine protection given to virtues.—So that the protection of the Gods would come to be of little weight in moral deliberations.

How far Philosophy is likely to make men forsake their vices, seems to have been tried in the Augustan Age. Had the Christian Religion been published in an unimproved age, or amongst Barbarians\*, it might have been urged, that it was needless, for that improvements in other things would have brought on improvements in manners: but when, amidst all the refinements of the Augustan age, the Religion was Idolatry, with many vicious rites; and the manners were such as Horace and St. Paul† describe them, there was little to be hoped for without some supernatural aid.—About eight years ago (Nov. 7, 1780) *Dr. Cooke* ‡, Provost of King's College, made a remark to me, in conversation, which may shew, that as much was to be expected from the Augustan age as from any. The knowledge of the whole world, which had been collected in preceding ages, is to be found, he said, in the *Roman* writers of the *Augustan age*. All the

\* See before, Chap. xvi. Sect. 3.

† Rom. i. 26, &c. Col. iii. 5, 6, 7. ‡ Dean of Ely.



the Philosophy in Cicero (particularly the Grecian;) all the general and ideal beauty and perfection (these are *my* words) in Virgil; all the active life in Horace. I probably do not do justice to the observation; but if, with these advantages, the Augustan age did not hinder men from being extremely vicious, it seems as if we might fairly conclude, that mere Philosophy is unequal to the work. — This is not denying the *possibility* of greater effects arising from Philosophy; that has been allowed in Section 3d; it is only reasoning, by analogy, from what has been tried and observed; but then it is on such reasoning as this, that all our hopes, expectations, undertakings, must be founded in human life.

13. The next thing to be observed is, that Philosophy is incapable of ensuring *remission* of Punishment. Men cannot be made secure as to this point, without some particular declaration from Heaven: remission must depend on the will of the Judge or Sovereign; and he only can declare his own purposes. If we attempt to judge from what we behold, by analogy, we shall find difficulty in determining, that God will forgive: will God never punish, except when punishment will promote the reformation of the Offender? yes; we suffer for *intemperance*, after we have \* ceased to be intemperate; this could not be, if every man was certainly to be forgiven, who did not want reformation. — Will God forgive because he is good? then he would never punish; for he is always good. Punishment, in every instance, answers the end of publishing the displeasure of God against sinful conduct; and shews his mode of restraining it.

14. Philosophy

\* Dr. Powell's 3d Charge. Leland on Lord Herbert of Chesham's 4th Universal Principle of Religion. My Poem on Redemption.

14. Philosophy is, moreover, unlikely to provide effectual means of promoting right conduct in the generality of the *People*.—Right conduct must be produced by right speculative principles or doctrines, and by good practical aids and expedients. Now, it is not to be expected, that ordinary men can examine into the grounds of all the notions they act from; they \* must take their opinions partly upon the authority of others: they may form some judgment of the comparative merit of different doctrines, but a very imperfect one: they must proceed, in a good measure, according to their opinions of the Persons, from whom they receive advice: the People have very little intercourse with Philosophers; it is only the wealthy, that have that privilege: and Philosophers, separate and disunited, want influence, at least to occasion any thing of an uniformity; and yet uniformity is one chief thing, which makes good principles readily accepted, and good moral expedients effectual.—There is another thing; no Devotion can arise from doubt: that is, from fluctuating opinions: not even private devotion, much less social: a man must have some settled religious notions, which shall be taken for true, ere his devout affections will have any force or fervour. Doubt may arise, either from the abstruseness of a doctrine, or from its being much disputed; and it is not likely, that Philosophers should furnish settled notions, in which the mind of the religious man would acquiesce: they have been too ignorant, to be free from grounds of doubt, each in his own mind; too much divided, to join their influence: too weak to enforce.—They seem to have had a consciousness of something of this sort, by the many expressions they have thrown out,

\* Dr. Balguy, Charge 5. p. 255. 8vo.



out, in the way of \* wishing for some Revelation, or of having recourse to some heavenly instruction.

But, supposing Philosophers willing to teach the People, and even to teach the same thing, yet the *kind* of instruction they would naturally use, would be, in a great measure, ineffectual; it would be too speculative, abstracted, delicate, profound: it would not enlighten a common understanding, much less warm the heart.

Particularly, it seems highly probable, that Philosophers would chiefly ground their exhortations on *moral* principles; whereas *religious* principles are by much the best adapted to influence the generality; as being most simple, strong, and most nearly allied to those principles, on which ordinary persons act habitually in common life. I am not certain how far any Philosopher has ever taught Virtue upon religious motives: pleasing the Gods by sacrifices has been common, and so has averting their anger; but a Lustration is a different thing from a course of Virtue.—If we would have a more particular conception of this matter, we must distinguish Virtue from Religion, and compare the efficacy of one with that of the other. He who performs his duties from any principle, which extends not beyond mankind, acts from motives of *Virtue*, whether he speaks of Rectitude, Honour, Benevolence, Prudence, moral sense, the general good, the Law of Nature, or the fitness of things: he who performs his duties from any view to *God*, to pleasing him, gaining rewards from him, or avoiding his displeasure, acts from motives of *Religion*. These latter set of motives seem, in the first place, more intelligible than the former;—I think it is evident, that a person, who attempted to  
act

\* See Clarke's Evidences, Prop. 6 and 7.—And Gibson's 2d Pastoral Letter, p. 74. 109.

act from the moral motives just now recited, would get into a great deal more intricacy and perplexity, than one, who had nothing to think of but how he should please or displease a single Personage.— In the next place, moral motives seem much more easy to be evaded than Omniscience or Omnipresence. And thirdly, moral motives must act much less forcibly, when any difficulties arise, or strong temptations occur, in the performance of duty, than the firm expectation of rewards or punishments, unbounded in their intensity and duration:—all this more especially in the case of persons of more ordinary and contracted apprehensions. — Moreover, religious principles do not preclude moral ones; on the contrary, religious affections strengthen love of merited praise, sense of honour, beauty, harmony, enlarged prudence; and they tend to refine Benevolence: which, of itself, may suffice to shew the weakness of Lord Shaftesbury's\* objections to religious motives.

15. But right conduct among the People depends, not only on right opinions, notions, doctrines; but also upon good *practical aids* and expedients. I conceive the chief of these to be *Religious Society*, or men's being united in religious worship, and in receiving instruction; and in a course of discipline: the nature and ends of religious society will be considered in our third Book, but we are, from the experience of common life, enough acquainted with its benefits, to proceed in our present reasoning †. Now, from what quarter should we expect any good religious institution of the social kind? if from any, (except Revelation) it must be from the wisdom

\* Leland's View, Letter 6.

† A short account of the Benefit of a Christian Church even to *Natural Religion* may be seen in Butler's Analogy, Part 2. Chap. 1. Paragraph beginning "*Farther*."



dom of civil legislation; but, useful as we now know social Religion to be to States and Kingdoms, it is unlikely, that any State should, merely by its own internal wisdom, have instituted a good *Church*, with right provisions, laws, religious exercises and discipline. Politicians would scarce *think* of such a thing;—they would be intent upon *wars*, alliances, commerce, taxation; and perhaps on public edifices, and the commodious passage of travellers and useful commodities from one place to another; but it is not likely, that they should see the importance of a good ecclesiastical Society even to themselves, much less that they should treat it as being, on its own account, the *most* important institution that could be maintained. No; religious society, however important, must be expected first from religious zeal, though, when so instituted, the State may court its *Alliance*\*.

It cannot be denied, that there are and have been Heathen *Priests*; but their cares seem to have been confined to externals; I do not remember, that they have had a superintendence over the hearts and internal principles; or that they have attempted to maintain any moral or religious discipline†. I should conceive, that, if they had attempted any thing of this kind, they would have run into dissensions; they could not well have been orderly and settled enough in Religion and morals, to have made experiments, and founded improvements upon them.

16. We now come to consider the *tendency* of the *Christian* Revelation to answer these ends, which mere Philosophy seems so unlikely to answer.

It

\* Neckar has written a Book on the benefits of Religion to a State.

† The Ancyran Monument is mentioned in Apthorp's Letters, p. 387. This monument looks as if Augustus's care of *Churches* had been confined to *buildings*: But I do not feel as if I had considered this subject enough.

It corrects *errors*, both religious and moral, in a bold and authoritative manner; which is the manner most likely to be effectual, when the hearer is not very inattentive; and it is the manner best suited to excite attention.—Though some of the Christian doctrines are abstruse, yet they are of such a nature, that the mind may acquiesce in them; they arise out of divine declarations concerning the Divine Nature; these must be ever indistinct to man; but they may be accepted.—And, as to prejudices, there is no way so likely to overcome them, as overturning at once the whole system of erroneous notions; prejudice cannot stand against such an attack as that: it supposes a continuance of that condition, to which men have been habituated. Revelation puts men into a condition wholly new.—Besides, when such a system as the Christian is proposed, it does not leave the mind *void* of principles, but immediately substitutes Christian principles in the room of Heathen: it cures *errors*, by substituting Christian *principles*; and those such as fill the whole mind, and occupy the whole attention.

The Christian Revelation has certainly a very strong tendency to cure men of their *Vices*, and is as likely to do it as any thing that can be imagined. Its miracles must have been astonishing;—and, when it has been preached in a forcible manner, it has shewn itself wonderfully powerful; “sharper than any two-edged \* sword;” Felix trembled at it; and it seems to provide some admirable means for preventing *relapses*; particularly confession, prayer, and renewal of the Baptismal covenant.

Besides, it acts with such efficacy on the whole inward frame, by its miracles, prophecies, and promises and threats all together, that the *moral sense* does

\* Heb. iv. 12.



does not seem to require so gradual a growth as in a state merely natural. If any man should deny or question this, yet he cannot well deny, that Christianity gives the moral sense a right direction; and, as it teaches us to know, so it teaches us to *approve* things \* excellent.—And, what is remarkable, the more we improve, the more excellent does Christianity appear in this respect †; in teaching us and making us love more and more perfect virtue:—what shall we say? if Christianity was low, mean, narrow, we should discover its meanness, narrowness, as we improved; but the more we improve, the more are we struck with the excellence and comprehensive nature of the virtue, which it recommends; and all that its enemies can say is, that reason would, upon trial, have recommended the same.—It seems to improve our moral sense, by putting us upon cultivating chiefly those virtues, which give us a right *turn*, and make us open to perpetual improvement.

It neither sets forth men nor Gods as protectors of Vice ‡.

As to the *remission* of punishment, it is published (on reasonable conditions) plainly, and repeatedly §: infomuch that preaching *Christianity* is sometimes called, preaching *Repentance and Remission* of Sins: and it is made a very strong motive to mutual forgiveness in || men:—to say more on that head is needless; because the Heathens acknowledged this as a peculiarity of the Christian religion, and contrived by misrepresentation (as if Christianity forgave every

\* Phil. i. 10.

† Before, Chap. xiii. Sect. 13.

‡ Psalm l. 21. “Thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such an one as thyself.”

§ Gibson's 2d Pastoral Letter, p. 119, where is a collection of texts to this purpose.

|| Eph. iv. 32.

every crime without conditions) to make it a subject \* of reproach.—Neither can it be necessary to explain particularly the need, which men have of Revelation, in this respect: every man feels himself accountable, whatever be the cause of such feeling; and it is in vain to expect, that men of virtue and religion can ever be upon a footing satisfactory to themselves, if they are unsettled in their minds, as to the forgiveness of those offences, of which they must be conscious.

Lastly, the Christian religion seems to make good provision for the generality of the *People*, considered in contradistinction to the learned, or philosophical†. And this, both in respect of speculation and practice.—It gives *doctrines* on authority, divine and human, which men are not required (if they are able) to see the grounds of thoroughly: yet they have a liberty of thinking for themselves, as far as their education and opportunities will allow: they are taught carefully, by Ministers appointed from the first rise of Christianity, and have much intercourse with their teachers, who have influence over them; partly as being members of a body of ministers, who all teach the same thing. They have indeed sometimes doctrines proposed to them, which are above their comprehension; but, when this is allowed, it does not excite doubt or perplexity: their notions are enough settled for all the ‡ principal purposes of religion; enough to leave their devout affections free scope.

The

\* Lard. Works, Vol. ix. p. 35, 36.

† “The poor have the Gospel preached unto them.” Matt. xi. 5.—comp. Is. lxi. 1.

‡ End of Dr. Powell’s first charge. What he says of systems of *Divines*, seems still more applicable to systems of *Philosophers*: that they have more points, which may be strictly called *doubtful*, than the Scriptures; though the Scriptures have more points *undetermined*.—In *doubtful* points, we have powerful reasons on both sides: in the *undetermined*, we have no reasons on either side: and therefore no burthensome employment for the mind.



The kind of instruction, which ordinary Christians receive, is plain; the Scriptures were composed by ordinary men, like themselves, filled with simple precepts, delivered on occasions, connected with facts, which serve to illustrate them, and make them interesting:—the credentials of the teachers are also highly interesting; that is, rational and benevolent miracles.—The motives to good conduct, offered by Christianity, are chiefly of the religious sort, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God\*,” and some peculiarly powerful; one might almost say, irresistible: yet they are mixed with noble and beautiful morality. Some motives are peculiar to Christianity, such as our being bought with a price†, our bodies being the Temples of the Holy Ghost, the Love of God in giving ‡ his Son to die for us; and so forth: and it is of the greatest moment, that Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.

The Christian religion, moreover, provides good *practical* expedients for maintaining a spirit of religion; indeed, motives may be considered in that number, perhaps as well as in the class of opinions or doctrines. It has been here observed (Sect. 15.) that even *civil Laws* are unlikely to form a good religious establishment of the *social* kind; but Christ formed his disciples into a Church§, or Society, instituting only a very small number of positive duties, expressive, to persons of all nations and languages, of the principal distinguishing truths of his Religion; his Apostles laboured to form local Societies,

\* 2 Cor. vii. 1.

† Bishop Hurd's Sermon on 1 Cor. vi. 20. Vol. 2. Sermon 13.

‡ Eph. iv. 32.

§ Vine—John xv. Sheepfold—John x. Feed my *Flock*, John xxi. 15, &c. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20. These hints will be enlarged upon hereafter. iii. 11. 4. and iv. 19. 15.

Societies, providing, as well as possible, for instruction, devotion, and discipline: making regulations, yet not precluding improvements.

Well then might Justin Martyr say, after examining as a Philosopher all sects of Philosophy, and leaving them all for Christianity, ταυτην μονην ευρισκων φιλοσοφικην ασφαλη τε καὶ συμφερον \*.

But, as we are mentioning all these things with a view to proving the truth of the Christian Religion, I would recommend it to every thinking man to consider the fact of Jesus's forming his disciples into a regular *society*, and instituting two positive duties to be perpetual. If he were an Impostor, how could he see the importance of a visible Church, to both natural and revealed religion? how could he see that, which (if we have reasoned right) Lawgivers have ever been unable to see?—but this must be left to every man's reflection.

The sum of our argument is, if men, in their moral and religious capacities, found many evils and defects, if Philosophy was not likely to remedy them, if Christianity has a tendency to remedy them, we may fairly presume, that Christianity is of Divine original.

17. One objection naturally occurs, and the consideration of it may throw light upon our subject.—If Christianity is concluded to be true, because it was published where it was wanted, why may we not conclude it false, because it is not published where it is most wanted, amongst barbarous nations?—Our first answer must be, that we have disclaimed every thing like entering into the counsels of God; and therefore we have not obliged ourselves to take any notice of such an objection.  
—But

\* Quoted by Lardner at the beginning of his account of Justin Martyr; in his *Credibility*, &c.



—But we may add, our ignorance of any particular case of other men, is no reason why we are mistaken about our own. One does me a favour; I am thankful to him: he withholds the same favour from another; I do not see why; does that make my gratitude needless?—We might also ask, would any merit be allowed to a Religion for improving those, who were very uncivilized?—but rather we may say, it seems agreeable to the idea of Human Society, that a part of mankind should have beneficial truths communicated to them, and that they should have charge of communicating such truths to others; every man improving himself, by instructing his neighbour.

18. But the best solution of this difficulty arises from considering the nature of the Christian revelation: it does not seem adapted to *uncivilized* nations: it is of an improved nature; Lardner says\*, “men must be rational and civilized, before they can be Christians:”—Christianity was preceded by other † Dispensations, each adapted to the circumstances, in which it was published. When *Elijah* called for fire from ‡ Heaven, he knew what spirit his Religion was of; men were not then qualified to be treated with mildness; but, when James and John § wanted to follow the precedent of Elijah, they were rebuked, and told, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of: different measures, even of God himself, are suited to different degrees of civilization. “The fulness of time” for Christ to become man was not arrived, till the world grew civilized: and, even after he assumed human nature, he instructed men only as they were able

\* End of Heathen Testimonies. See also about *Origen*, Vol.

2. p. 464.

† Bp. Law's Theory.

‡ 2 Kings i.

§ Luke ix. 51.

able to \* *bear it* ; and his Apostles found *Babes*† in *Christ* amongst those who, as human beings, were grown up to maturity.

It may be said, if men must be civilized before they can be Christians, what use is there in our Society for propagating the Gospel? The general views of that Society seem rational; we need not defend every particular measure; we ought to be instrumental in spreading the benefits of Christianity as far as we are able, by prudent and virtuous methods; we are indeed directed, not to throw pearls before swine; but we may endeavour to civilize those, who are capable of improvement, with a view to making them Christians afterwards. Those able Prelates, who have preached at the solemn meetings of this Society, have not been averse to such a plan. It has been wished, that a few children of the uncivilized could be taught “agriculture, œconomy, order ‡ and government,” from their youth, and that they should teach others, of their own tribes. Their Religion might be in the *Christian Form*, and they might be shewn *Christian Virtues*; though at first they would know its doctrines only by rote, and would not be sensible of its excellence.—As they grew more civilized, they would see more of its meaning, and of its worth, (which indeed may be the case of the most improved amongst men) and at length they might become such, both in civilization and in knowledge of Christianity, as those to whom the Christian Religion was first published. It is our wish and hope, that Christianity may extend to all mankind: Lardner believed§, that, if no principles of persecution had

\* Mark iv. 33. † 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

‡ Bp. Lowth's Ser. p. 22, 23. Bp. Law's Theory, p. 26, 27. 4th Edit.

§ Works, Vol. 4. p. 181.



had prevailed (either amongst Heathens or Christians) the Religion of Christ would, by this time, have been the universal Religion; we may say, without contradicting him, only taking the matter up higher, that the most likely method to make it such, must be, to offer it first to those, who were most civilized, and to engage them gradually to civilize others, by way of preparing them for giving it a due reception.

19. Considering other objections would probably still farther illustrate our subject, and justify our method of reasoning from fact.—Indeed, though such reasoning affords a probable presumption, strong enough to act upon, yet it may appear to some, the *best* adapted to answer *objections*.—It is certainly well adapted to that purpose:—though we can with probability, yet we cannot without diffidence, say, that God gave men Revelation, *in order* to remedy the moral and religious evils, under which they laboured; but, if any one *objects* to Christianity as a superfluous, *needless* dispensation, we can much more confidently affirm, that such objection is not well grounded.—Does any one alledge, that men would have found out their duty, and the way to happiness, without it? we dare reply, that such a thing was not to be *expected*.—Is it presumed, that, after men had got in any degree enlightened, they would never have run back into error or vice? we do not scruple to pronounce such a presumption vain and irrational.

This is a different thing from professing to know the situation of things, when Christianity was first published, so that we could positively say beforehand, that God *must* publish such a Religion; or that he could not leave men to their natural faculties:—it is different from saying, that, in fact, he did not leave them their choice about accepting his Religion:

Religion: or even from affirming positively, that what improvements we can observe, were solely owing to Christianity, or owing to it in any certain degree. To say, that the wisdom or goodness of God must produce such an effect, is talking the language of Gods; to refer a blessing actually received to the Divine Wisdom, or Goodness, is talking the language of men. We could not say, that the goodness of God *would be* the cause of our having a sense of Beauty or Sublimity; but, when we have such perceptions, we can say, that we *owe* them to the Divine Goodness.

Bishop Butler makes use of reasoning from fact, to answer objections against Christianity\*; shewing, that the same sort of things happen in a course of Nature, which are objected to in revealed Religion; yet he does not pretend, that he could have told *beforehand* that such things would happen, in either the one or the other. This seems a perfect defence of Christianity, as to any particular objection; because all we want to prove is, that Christianity comes from the Author of Nature;—and, if the same thing happens in a course of Nature, then Christianity *may* come from the Author of Nature, notwithstanding that objection.

One objection it may be very proper to conceive to be made: if reasoning from fact is suitable to the narrow views of man, why should we not adopt Mr. *Hume's* reasoning from fact? why is it commonly blamed? I mean, that about a particular Providence, and a † Future State? In his Essay on that subject, he argues, that we have no right to call

\* See the Close of the Introd. to his Analogy.

† Essays, Vol. 2. 8vo. The observation extends to his *Posthumous Dialogues*. See Chap. 4. of this Book, Sect. 4. This argument was mentioned there, but without any relation to the Goodness of God, or the existence of Evil.



call God perfectly good, so long as there is any evil in fact existing; God is the cause, and can only be known by effects; whatever evil therefore is found in fact, must be charged to him, and his goodness must be allowed to receive a diminution or abatement, proportioned to that evil. The fault of the argument seems to be, that it does not distinguish between necessary evil, and unnecessary; between what *must* be, and what *is*. All evil that must be, all that is necessary, or unavoidable, is to be referred or ascribed to the first cause: but all evil that is unnecessary or avoidable, should be ascribed to those, who might avoid it, and do not. If I were to drink a pint of strong spirituous liquor at a draught, it would give me great pain, and perhaps bring on a lasting disorder; but surely no one would ascribe that pain to *God*, as its cause, in the same manner as if I could not have avoided it. —If men therefore bring on themselves a part of the evil they suffer, that part ought not to be charged on God, so as to lessen the goodness of God in our estimation. And, if it could be proved, that *all* the evil, which mankind suffers, might be avoided by mankind (which I believe to be the case\*, supposing mankind to act unitedly, and for any length of time) then mankind ought to acknowledge the goodness of God to be *perfect*.

But has this distinction, it may be said, been made here, in reckoning up the evils, which Christianity is likely, and Philosophy unlikely, to cure? that is, has a distinction been always kept in view between evils which are, and evils which must be? It has *not*; because, in some cases the distinction is wanted,

\* At least, men might keep approximating to a perfect freedom from evil.—The *evils* of *imperfection* or *defect* are cured by a full sense of their being *unavoidable*: that is, when that sense is fully settled, defects no longer give *pain*.

wanted, in others it is not. When we are speaking of the *cause* of any evil, the distinction should not be forgotten; when of the remedy, it need not be attended to; (except indeed we are speaking of the application of the remedy, as a voluntary act:)—If we were speaking of the cause and origin of the moral and religious evils of the Heathen world, we should settle how far they were unavoidable, how far voluntary; but, as we speak only of the remedy, that is, Revelation, we may neglect that difference:—It matters much, as to the proof of the divine goodness, whether the errors and vices of the Heathens were necessary, or owing to themselves; but it is of little significance, with regard to the *Benefits* of Revelation. If a man fractures a limb, you apply the best *remedy*, without inquiring whether the fracture was *owing* to his own fault or not; though afterwards you may make such inquiry, and his *character* may be affected by it.

Cicero says\*, in the character of Cotta, the Academic, or Sceptic, “Si, consensu omnium philosophorum, sapientiam nemo *assequitur*, in summis malis omnes sumus, quibus vos optimè consultum a Diis immortalibus dicitis: nam, ut nihil interest utrùm nemo *valeat*, an nemo *possit* valere; sic non intelligo quid intersit, utrùm nemo *sit* sapiens, an nemo esse *possit*.” Dr. *Samuel Clarke* commends this passage, but, I imagine, without perceiving how it might be misapplied: it professedly rejects all distinction between necessary and voluntary evil; it is the argument of a Sceptic endeavouring to confound all that Balbus, the Stoic, had been urging: Dr. Clarke himself applies it rightly, that is, when the question is about the *remedy* of evil; but, by his

\* De Naturâ Deorum, iii. 32.

† Evidences, near end of Prop. 6. and Prop. 7. marg. reference, p. 670, fol.



his unqualified manner of commending it, he seems not to perceive, that, if it was admitted in all cases, it would destroy the proof of the Divine Benevolence *à posteriori*.—But, of the argument *à posteriori*, we have spoken in the 4th Chapter of this Book; and we needed not to have made our present observation, (though it is somewhat different from that made before) if Dr. Clarke's commendation had not related to our present subject.

I am unwilling to close this Chapter, without some mention of *Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, as he was one of the most eminent, and I believe the first, of the persons called *Deists*; and as his reasonings are directed to prove the contrary of what we have been proving in the present Chapter, that there was need of Revelation. He flourished about the middle of the last Century, and was a man of literature.—He published several works, but I shall confine myself to his *five short notices*, mentioned in different parts of his works, which he says God has inscribed on the minds of all men, and which render all Revelation unnecessary. I take these from *Leland*\*, not having Lord Herbert's Book *de Religione † Gentilium* at hand.—“ 1. That there is *one* supreme God. 2. That he is chiefly to be worshipped. 3. That piety and virtue is the principal part of his worship. 4. That we must repent of our Sins; and, if we do so, God will pardon them. 5. That there are rewards for good men, and punishments for bad men, in a future state.”—Much might be said upon these Articles; but, after what I have already said on the several subjects of them, I will not enlarge in this place.—On the first and second of them taken jointly, it seems only needful to remark, that, before Christianity, we know of no people, except the Jews, who worshipped “one Supreme God,”  
and

\* Letter i. p. 3.

† Cap. 15. init.

and him only; which the expression seems to imply. A mere preference of one God is trifling; not likely to be *inscribed* on the minds of all men. Only the Jews acknowledged both the unity and spirituality of God, and their religion was revealed.—Had only the lowest of the Heathen people run into Polytheism and Idolatry, it would be enough for us; because these notices are said to be inscribed on the minds of *all* men: but the highest ran into them, as well as the lowest. We have before spoken \* of Pliny and Julian; we may now add the Emperor †Augustus to the number.—3. If piety and virtue are declared, to the minds of all men, to be the principal parts of divine worship, the declaration must mean rational piety, and improved virtue; not the virtue of a *Savage*; how then could it happen, that the piety of millions should be in direct contradiction to every man's common reason? and the very ceremonies of worship so impure, in several cases, as to be inconsistent with every system of morals? not to mention again the enormities, into which even Philosophers permitted men to run. But the chief part of divine worship amongst Pagans, has consisted of modes of appeasing and conciliating Deities, *without* Piety and Virtue. What Balak says, Micah vi. 6, 7, may be looked upon as the general inquiry of Idolaters.—4. That God will forgive men, upon repentance, has been proved to be a thing unknown to the Heathens: they themselves reproached Christianity with publishing such a doctrine; and the Christian religion places remission upon a foundation, which was not discoverable by natural reason: I mean, the merits of Jesus Christ.—5. A *future state* of rewards and punishments

\* Chap. xii. Sect. 16 and 17.

† See Apthorp's Letters, p. 345. and Hume's Nat. Hist. of Religion, Sect. 12.



punishments was by no means universally allowed; we have already said, that the Epicureans, who were very considerable, denied it more positively than any other sect affirmed it.

Strange *notices* these! or at least strangely effaced, supposing them to have been ever inscribed on the mind by the Creator and Governor of the world.

I will say no more of Lord Herbert, nor of the need which men have of Revelation; therefore I here close the first Book: but, as an *Appendix*, I will add something concerning the early *Christian Sects*, or Heresies (*αἵρεσεις*);—as the allusions to them in the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers, are numberless; nor can the *Articles* of any Church be understood, without some knowledge of them: we do not want them yet; but, as remarks on them are *common* to all sects of Christians, they should be placed here.



## A P P E N D I X.

### CONCERNING THE *EARLY SECTS*, OR HERESIES, OF CHRISTIANS.

#### SECT. I. II. III.

Εἰποὺν ἂν (καὶ) τὸν ἐπιμελὲς ἐνιδόντα ταῖς Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ καὶ Χριστιανισμοῦ αἵρεσεσι, σοφωτάτου Χριστιανοῦ γενέσθαι.

Ausim affirmare, illum esse inter Christianos sapientissimum, qui Judæorum atque Christianorum sectas introspectit diligentissimè.

Origenes contra Celsum, Lib. 3. p. 119. Ed. Spenceri.

1. **SOME** account of the early Sects, or Heresies (*αἵρεσεις*), of the Christian Church, is wanted: for the *Scriptures*, which often allude to them: for the *Fathers*, who will seem more reasonable, the more we enter into their views: and for the *confessions* of Faith of different sects of Christians, in later times, who build Creeds and Articles upon them; or frame declarations, with a design to contradict or renounce them.

2. *Early Heresies*, the chief of which prevailed in the two first Centuries, may be ranged into *two Classes: Oriental, and Judaical*.

3. We begin with the *Oriental*: in the accounts of which, given us by the ancients, we find many things which we cannot understand, and many which we cannot believe. Now, the best way of considering these will be, to take that Heresy first which, though last \* in point of time, admits of the

\* See Theodoret Heret. Fab. T. 4. p. 188. or Lardner's Her. B. 1. Sect. 6. Works, Vol. 9. p. 234, top.



the most distinct \* explication, if it be not the most important, as I believe it is; I mean, the sect of *Manicheans*. If we can get a tolerable notion of that, we may afterwards get some of those, which are more confused and imperfect.—The common defect is, that no authentic writings (except perhaps a few fragments) remain, which have been published in support of them.

4. Let us then, at present, treat of the *Manicheans*; considering, i. The name of their Leader.—ii. His private Life.—iii. The time his Doctrines were spread in the Roman Empire.—iv. His works.—v. His followers.—vi. His principles of natural Religion, (including Metaphysics).—vii. His morality. viii. His system of revealed religion.—ix. His mode of worship.—x. His Church-government.—xi. His pretensions.—xii. His *imitators* in later ages.

Several writers have treated on this subject; Wolfius, Beaufobre, Tillemont, Cave, Lardner, &c.†—I am best acquainted with Lardner, and, in collecting my observations, have made the most use of him.

i. The *name* of the Leader of this Sect seems to have been *Mani*, most properly; he was a *Persian*; and those, who have translated from the Persian, have written his name in some different ways, (Manes, and Manichæus); but this seems the Eastern way. Hyde, in his History of the Religion of the ancient Persians, says, “In omnibus Arabum et Persarum Libris, constantè vocatur ‡ *Mani*.”

ii. The History of Mani is obscure, and many biographical accounts of him are fabulous. He was probably a Painter and Engraver, and acquainted

\* Lard. Her. has the same thought.

† Besides the writers on Heresies, Epiphanius, Philaster, Augustin, Vincent;—see also Cyril's 6th Cathedesis.

‡ Hyde, p. 281. Hist. Rel. vet. Pers.

ed with other arts, and with sciences. He was an Astronomer; so as to have a notion of Antipodes; and a Philosopher. He observed Phænomena attentively, but often accounted for them in a fanciful manner: indeed Fancy was, long after his time, admitted to account for phænomena of Nature; though not always a Persian fancy. Whether he understood phyfic, is doubtful: he invented a musical instrument. In philosophizing, he was bold, scheming, dogmatical.—He was wealthy, and a man of consequence under three Persian monarchs; by the last of whom he was put to death.

iii. As to dates, we can say, that Manicheism was *not* known in the Roman Empire in the time of Cyprian, who is placed in the year 248, and suffered martyrdom in 258; and that it *was* known before the Council of Nice, which was held in 325. So that it became known, probably, towards the close of the third Century. Mr. Gibbon thinks, that Mani did not *begin* to teach till the year 270\*.

iv. His *Works* seem to have been pretty numerous: but they are now chiefly known by quotations from them, made by those, who wrote against the Sect. However, there are some large fragments. His principal work seems to have been the *Epistle of the Foundation*, shewing the nature of his Sect; about which Augustin has written attentively and largely.

v. He had *followers*, who were to be met with in many places, but they were no where numerous. Amongst them were some Bishops, and several writers, as Faustus, Fortunatus, Adimantus, &c. but they were more plausible than solid; they had no great erudition, and but a poor idea of Criticism; yet they were fond of arguing:—possibly, they might form a party, in opposition to some followers

\* Hist. Vol. 2. p. 232. Quarto.



followers of *Zoroaster*, and take Christianity as an Ally.

vi. The *natural religion* of Mani may, perhaps, be called the principal thing relating to him. How far it was original, must be seen by accounts of *Zoroaster*, *Confucius*, *Foë*: it is fanciful certainly, but let us judge of it as candidly as we are able.—Let us suppose his principal view to be, to clear God of being the Author of Evil; I know not, whether every thing may not be deduced from that supposition, and it really seems a \* probable one. Most leaders of Sects mean well at bottom, though they may be vain, and fond of their own inventions.

Evil all comes from *Matter*, but God is good; originally therefore, says Mani, there was one God, and there was also *Matter*, or *Hyle* (𐭮𐭥𐭭): so matter is the worst possible thing. God is perfect, and Persian perfection must always have something to do with Light; and imperfection, with darkness. All this seems to have been taught in Persia, by *Zoroaster*†, many ages before the time of Mani;—the Temple of the Sun is reckoned a capital Ruin.—Mani keeps to this as long as he can, but how did this 𐭮𐭥𐭭 or matter get into being? The good God did not create such a vile thing; he would be the author of evil; nothing else could create it; ergo, it is a *principle*; without beginning.—But there are active powers, which produce evil?—there are evil passions; therefore 𐭮𐭥𐭭 must be *personified*: a common thing:—but then the *Matter* 𐭮𐭥𐭭 gets confounded with the *Person* 𐭮𐭥𐭭, and afterwards the *person creates the matter*.—But we see a *mixture* of good and evil in the world? true;—this is *light*,  
and

\* Cudworth agrees; Lard. Her.

† Hyde's *Historia Religionis veterum Persarum*, Cap. 9. also p. 295.—The *Time* of *Zoroaster* seems doubtful; some say, he was as early as Abraham. He does not appear in Blair.

and its parts, mixed with *darkness*, and its associates, or parts.—Then good and evil *strive* and contend? (Rom. vii.) . . . true; there was a *Battle*, between the Host of \* light, and the powers of darkness†; we must not expect, that this Battle of Mani's imagining, will please as much in plain prose, as *Milton's* battle of Angels pleases in Poetry.—Then, man has a *soul* naturally pure, united to a gross body; how is this to be solved upon Manichean principles?—why, *God* made the *Soul*, and *Satan* made the *Body*: and Body tempted Soul to enter in and dwell there, with a view to sensual delights. For Body seems to include both matter and sensation.

Thus, there is but *one God*: and good and evil effects are instantly resolved into *two causes*; one good, and the other evil. The facts seem to be stated fairly enough by Mani; but he does not think it needful to be nice in his experiments, made in order to account for them.

vii. This same hatred of Matter and Body will enable us to give some idea of the Manichean *Morality*:—for the morals of the Manicheans were very spiritual; even marriage was only tolerated; and not tolerated in the higher rank, called the *Elect*. Abstemiousness and mortification were as much honoured as amongst any order of modern Monks. If matter and body were such vile things, all enjoyments of the senses must be vile, and must be shunned as much as possible.

viii. Abomination of Matter and Body affected the *revealed* religion professed by the Manicheans.—The *Old Testament* tells us, that God created matter; absurd and impossible! say the Manicheans;—and so they *reject* the *Old Testament* at once; wholly.

\* 2 Cor. xi. 14.

† Eph. vi. 12. Col. i. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.



wholly. It recommends too a set of vile men, who indulged some of their *senses*! To be sure Adam and Eve *were* the first couple; but they ran into corporeal familiarity, and that was, in reality, their *first offence*.—In the *New Testament*, some passages are found, which are taken out of this *Old Testament*;—mere Jewish Interpolations! the rest indeed of the *New Testament* is genuine:—only we must not conceive Christ to have been a *real* man, made of matter as we are: his *Body* (if Body it could be called) could not be of matter.—We are told he was *crucified*, but his crucifixion could not be real, it must have been only *apparent*, and mystical:—and such also must have been his *Resurrection*; we observe the Festival of *Easter* to celebrate it as such:—a Body like ours can never be raised to a state of Salvation.

The Manichean doctrine of the *Trinity* supposed the first person in Heaven\* (I think): the second in the Sun (*το φως*) as to his power, and in the Moon as to his Wisdom: and the third person in the *Air* (*Spiritus*.)

ix. The Manichean *Worship* was simple; it was purposely made unlike the Heathen worship: the worshippers had Prayer, instructions, and Sacraments, but that of the Lord's Supper was celebrated without Wine.—*Scriptures* were publicly read, and other things, particularly the Epistle of the *Foundation*. Sunday was kept, but as a Fast: it has been said, that this Sect worshipped the *Sun* and *Moon*; but Lardner supposes that notion to have arisen from their turning towards the Sun and Moon in their worship; yet Faustus says something like this; ‘God forbid, that we should be ashamed of worshipping the sacred Luminaries†.’ This ceremony,

\* In light inaccessible: see Lard. Works, Vol. 3. p. 459.

† Aug. contra Faustum, Lib. 20. Cap. 1.

remony, however, naturally followed from the idea just now mentioned, that the second person of the Trinity, το Φως, had some sort of Residence in the Sun and Moon.—Though, by their virtue and religious worship, the Manicheans endeavoured to purify the *Soul*, yet they conceived, that it did not, could not, get sufficiently philtered for the purity of *Heaven*, without going through several *transmigrations*.

x. Most of what we have hitherto seen of the Manicheans, arose from their hatred of Matter, and their idea of the vileness of it; but their *Church government* does not seem to have been founded upon that; the ruling aim was, to resemble the *primitive Church*.—Mani himself was the Head of the Body, (not in any presumptuous or arrogant way, that I know of); the next set of Officers, or Ministers, consisted of *twelve*; these appointed Bishops and Presbyters, with Deacons to each.—The great division of this Ecclesiastical Body, was into *Elect* and *Auditors*.—The Auditors were kept separate from the Elect, though the Elect were maintained by them. It has been already observed, that the Elect might not marry; the Auditors might, but marriage in them was rather tolerated than commended.—Augustin was once an auditor amongst the Manicheans, but never one of the Elect;—yet he seems to me to controvert points with them, much as if he had never been one of their Body: he gives a worse account of them than is thought credible; particularly of their Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The most candid judgment about which account is, that, as a young Auditor, he knew very little about the more solemn parts of their worship, and wrote of them, as of other sects, according to what he heard reported: perhaps the enemies of the sect might represent them to him as unfavourably



unfavourably as possible, in order to secure his separation from them.

xi. Mani has, I think, been spoken of as making high *pretensions* to supernatural powers, and to communication with Heaven:—the best judges seem to think, that he never made any pretensions whatever to miracles\*; whether he pretended to any supernatural intercourse with God, is thought very doubtful. In his time, it is probable, that few taught any thing that was unknown to the vulgar, without using some language of their own, or applying some language of Scripture, which might be understood as pretending, in some degree, to supernatural power. Chemistry, Physics, Morals, Laws, as well as religion, have often had a mysterious air, when they were taught; *Mathematician*† and *Magician* have often been used as synonymous: and so have *Astronomy* and *Astrology*. The enthusiasm of invention gives an appearance of inspiration, and, when the people take up the notion, and attribute discoveries to a supernatural cause, it may be difficult, and may be thought hurtful, or imprudent, to *disclaim* high and heavenly communications‡. But I say this in general: that Mani gave into any pretensions of this sort, has not been proved.

xii. Some of the abstemious sects of Christians seem to have run into an *imitation* of the Manichean tenets and practices; (or they and the Manicheans have had one common origin:) and would probably have done it more, had Christianity been the ruling Religion in *Persia*. It is surprizing how far the *Cathari*, in the 12th Century, carried such imitation: and at such a distance from *Persia*! in Bulgaria!

\* See Lardner.

† Lard. Her.

‡ Voltaire; see Vol. 14. Quarto, p. 347. about Stoffer's Deluge in 1524.

Bulgaria!—but, for particulars, I will refer to Mo-  
sheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. 12. Part 2.  
Chap. 5. Sect. 4.

5. Such is our account of the *Manicheans*: being  
possessed of the particulars of it, we shall more rea-  
dily comprehend what may be said upon Sects or  
Heresies antecedent to it, which are less fully de-  
scribed.—To these we are now to come.

When we consider the various notions and prac-  
tices of Christian sects, it is natural to wish to see  
the *origin* of such as strike us most; and those are  
apt to appear the most striking, which have been  
continued down to modern times, though perhaps  
with some variation: but when (as is generally the  
case) we cannot get distinct ideas of their origin,  
we are apt to fall into disputes about it. As an  
instance, may be mentioned *Monastic Life*. Some  
think the origin of it is to be found in the *third*\*,  
some in the *fourth*† Century, some in the *eleventh*‡;  
and some trace it up to the *Rechabites* § mentioned  
by Jeremiah, some to the *Assideans* || mentioned in  
the Books of Maccabees, and others to the *Essenes* ¶  
mentioned by Philo and Josephus.—With regard  
to whole systems of Heretical notions, there seem  
also to be doubts. Most men agree, that very  
early Christians mixed such Philosophy as they had  
learnt, with the tenets of Christianity; but from  
whence had their Philosophy been derived?—It is  
generally thought, that there were Heresies in the  
time of the Apostles; but how far were they new?  
—Though something might perhaps be said, in  
answer to such questions, I do not think, that per-  
fect satisfaction is to be attained by any inquiry into  
antiquity,

\* Priestley's Hist. Corr. Part 12. Intro. and Sect. 1.

† Gibbon. ‡ Forbes. § Jer. Chap. 35.

|| 1 Maccab. ii. 42. vii. 13.—2 Macc. xiv. 6.

¶ See also Michaelis, Intro. Lect. Sect. 122. Quarto.



antiquity, which can now be made. I should prefer to strict researches into antiquity, a simple examination of those general principles of *Human Nature*\*, which are likely to produce the opinions and practices we meet with:—we shall have much less anxiety about the time when any opinion sprang up, if we are persuaded, that it might spring up at *any* time†.

I say general principles, but, when any particular appearances are to be solved, Human Nature must be taken as it is found in some *particular circumstances*, which will have a great effect upon what we call general principles, in making them take different courses at different times.—Under circumstances, may be included regions, climates, diet, forms of Government, modes of Education, customs, traditions, habitual notions, state of arts and sciences, and forms of Religion.

With such ideas of general principles and particular circumstances, we say, that, in Religion, these three things, *contemplative Life*, *mortification*, and belief in Angels and *Spirits*, as constantly affecting human life, are connected together, and promote one another; though there may be particular situations, which may strengthen or weaken their natural connexion.—This would not be affirmed, if the generality of the early oriental Christian sects had not their doctrines compounded of these three ingredients.

\* I am happy to find a thought not very different from this in Bp. Hallifax on Prophecy, p. 181. And Dr. Priestley says, (Hist. Corr. Part 12. Introd.) “It is the *same principle*, that made Essenes among the Jews, Monks among Christians, Derivises among Mahometans, and Fakirs among Hindoos.”

† See the difficulty of this subject, on a footing of fact or History, Michaelis's Introd. Lect. Sect. about *Essenes*. Sect. 123. Quarto. And MacLaine's Mosheim, 1. 2. 5. 3. about *Gnostics*, Note (r).

ingredients\*. In Christian sects, we may perhaps be permitted to include those half-Christian inhabitants of the Deserts, who knew only John's Baptism†.

But, for the sake of distinctness, let us divide our assertion into four propositions.

6. i. A life of solitary religious *contemplation* promotes *mortification* and self-denial.—Not only as it removes occasions of luxury and indulgence, but as it naturally produces what may be called punishment for intemperance, and reward for abstinence.

In contemplative Life, several evils, or punishments, arise for intemperance; in it the intemperate are unhappy, in different ways: it is impossible for the intemperate to have any tolerable health in a state of inaction, and every unhealthy person (I believe we may say) is unhappy. And, if a bodily disorder should sometimes be of slow growth, yet perhaps the cure may be equally slow.—Intemperance would, in solitude, nourish discontent, as it would give birth to propensities towards unattainable enjoyments; this discontent would act as a punishment.—And the desire of prohibited pleasures, when it became habitual, would make the mind vicious; would corrupt it, and so make it feel remorse: a state of rebellion to reason and conscience is never an easy state; but particularly uneasy, when reflexion cannot be overpowered by riot and dissipation.—It would be easily conceived, that Luxury must be an abuse of a religious contemplative life; and the sense of that must embitter what

\* See Michaelis, Introd. Lect. Quarto. beginning of Sect. 101.—the whole of Sect. 123, and, I think, 124.—See also Sect. 125, page 324, towards bottom.

† Acts, Chap. xix.—Michaelis's Introd. Quarto, Sect. 125.—Voltaire, 4to. Vol. 26. page 111.



what gratifications could be attained in solitude.— These punishments, ill health, discontent, and remorse, would often be combined;—but, if they were not, the mind would grow uneasy under any of them, and of course restless; which would make it look out for a situation more comfortable and satisfactory.

And it would soon perceive, that, in a solitary, religious, contemplative life, there are not only punishments for intemperance, but also rewards for abstemiousness. So that every degree of abstemiousness seems to answer to a man in such a life, and to be productive of good. The Body, though not robust, becomes free from disorders, supple, light, and unencumbered; not strong, but easily set in motion, and disposed to agility: and robust and strong enough for all purposes of a contemplative life. The mind is also active, and light; the sentiments become refined, polished, benevolent: the intellects penetrating, so that the investigation of Truth becomes successful and pleasing—And a consciousness of not being refractory, but resigned to the situation of affairs, gives a serenity, and a mild complacency, which makes every thing wear a pleasing aspect.—This consciousness grows stronger, as the contemplative man gets a stronger sense of the sinfulness of the world, and of the merit of retiring from it. All this must greatly promote abstemiousness, in a life of solitary contemplation.—What I describe will, I think, be acknowledged for reality by those, who have seen Eastern manners, or the behaviour and looks of some Monks in Popish countries of Europe.

7. ii. Abstemiousness, when become habitual, promotes in return religious solitary contemplation. This may already in some measure appear; but it may not be superfluous to observe, that he  
who

who has, for a number of years, abstained from rich food, grows so feeble and delicate, that he cannot bear the shocks and rudenesses arising in intercourse with worldly men: coarse mirth, unfeeling selfishness, bold ostentation, act upon him with such a repulsive force, that it requires the utmost efforts of his courage and resolution to continue any time in ordinary society: he retires; he then finds himself at home; sheltered, protected: his fine tastes, his elegant conceptions, his mild and sweet affections, out of the reach of contempt and ridicule, spring forth, bloom, and flourish. And, when he has long continued in this way, he gets to think common life very faulty and imperfect, and attaches himself unalterably to a contemplative life, as to that, in which alone the lower part of man is duly degraded, and the higher faculties worthily honoured and respected.

8. iii. A temper, formed by contemplation and abstemiousness, will, more than other tempers, encourage notions of the agency of *Spirits* and *Angels*.—Such a course of Life will strongly inflame the imagination; and that faculty delights in personifying; and in assigning personal causes of all interesting events. In common life, we personify more than we are aware of;—‘you are *Prudence* itself!’ we say; and we paint Faith, Hope, and Charity. We find also Fear creating Spectres and Apparitions.—This may put us in the way of conceiving how a mind, purged and refined, and at the same time weakened, by a contemplative and abstemious life, may fall readily into notions of Angels, Spirits, Demons; and into solving appearances by their ministry and interference. The idea of their presence and influence must be highly delightful and flattering; and we naturally dwell on what delights and flatters us; and dwelling on



any thing, disposes us to believe it: Solitude had appeared the least evil, and therefore the contemplative had fled to it; but he still is glad to have his solitude relieved by angelic society, though only imaginary.—Sometimes indeed Reason will interfere; but Reason must allow, that there *may* be superior intelligences, between Man and the Great Supreme. HE is a Spirit, and to be worshipped in Spirit\*.—From allowing that there *may* be Spirits, it is an easy step to determining that there *are*: and from existence, the man of warm fancy, when not checked by intercourse with active life, easily passes on to the *manner* of existence. But we know so little of superior Beings, that this can be described only by the imagination; and therefore systems of Angels and Spirits, formed by man, must admit of endless *variety*†.

9. iv. Lastly, this readiness to account for events by the intervention of Angels must, in its turn, promote and encourage abstemious and contemplative life; because, in such a life, that turn and disposition will find the greatest encouragement and the freest indulgence.

10. So much for what were called *general principles* of human Nature; we might now proceed to see how *particular situations* would modify and vary the effects of these general principles; but it may be proper previously to observe, that the description here given of solitary Life, though it may seem favourable in some respects, is not intended to imply, that it is *right* upon the whole. Supposing it were agreed, that the higher faculties of man ought to be

\* John iv. 24.

† It may be remarked here, though we are in a different train, that one reason, why the Easterns always conceive the Deity surrounded with Angels, &c. who do all inferior work, is, that a number of splendid attendants makes part of their habitual notion of greatness;—as does also freedom from labour.

be supported in their due rank and dignity, it would not follow, that the lower ones were to be annihilated; that is not here meant:—much less is it intended to represent a solitary life, as if it of course avoided moral and spiritual dangers, as much as it avoids the society of men. Every kind of life has its peculiar dangers, or is liable to its peculiar Vices. The “dangers in the practice of Virtue; to which men of retired and studious lives, abstracted in a great degree from the pleasures, the business, and the conversation of the world, are exposed,” seem well described by Dr. Powell\*; but a description of such dangers is not a denial of the advantages of such a life; nor does that most respectable Author intend it for such, as he expressly declares†.

11. Now we come to consider, how some *particular situations* may affect these general principles in practice: laying it down, in order to prevent mistakes, that, at the same time that any certain situation may promote the disposition, which is compounded of a love for contemplative life, abstemiousness, and a belief in the agency of Spirits, in some respects; it may discourage the same disposition, in other respects: laying it down also, that, when a cause is said to be productive of any effect, it is supposed not to be counteracted by any other cause.

i. If men are situated, where *Science* has been little cultivated, or has been wrongly cultivated, they will be the more liable to catch the temper now described; to fall into contemplative life, to contract notions of the merit of abstemiousness, and of the agency of Spirits and Demons: when a general ignorance prevails, virtue is supposed to be something

\* Ser. 1st.—See p. 3. top.

† P. 20. near bottom. His description of the Vices of “an idle Monk,” is p. 19. bottom.



something very wonderful ; it is estimated, not by its utility, but by its distance from ordinary pursuits. And every enjoyment is fancied, indistinctly indeed, to come from some good Genius; every calamity, from some malignant Demon.—Nay, though some parts of Science have been attended to, yet, if researches have been made upon fantastic grounds, the matter is not much mended. A man may be an observer of the Heavenly Bodies ; but yet, if he is ignorant of rational and mathematical elements of Astronomy, his imagination prevails ;—he conceives every Star either to be the Star of some Prince\*, or to have its presiding Angel ; its Lucifer†, or its Abaddon ; and he soon neglects all distinction between the material luminary, and its immaterial angelic ruler ;—at the same time that he believes the material world to be governed by certain combinations of immaterial agents. There is nothing to stop him from taking up the Star of his God *Remphan*‡, and worshipping the Host of Heaven.—Or a man may attend, in like manner, to *chemical* operations, and they may only excite his wonder, and serve to confirm his belief of magic, enchantment, and the operations of Demons.—Or attention, in the state of ignorance here supposed, may be paid to *numbers* ; and those properties be only thought of, which please and entertain the fancy. Of these properties, analogies, harmonies, there is great abundance : so that excellence and efficacy has been § ascribed to some numbers, in preference to others ; nay, the Soul itself has been imagined to be number||.

ii. The

\* Numb. xxiv. 17. Matt. ii. 2.

† Is. xiv. 12. Rev. ix. 11.

‡ Acts vii. 42, 43.

§ Voltaire, Vol. xxvii. 4to, p. 422 about the number *seven*, from Clemens Alex.—Also Michaelis, 4to. Introd. Lect. p. 317, 319. Ficinus on Plato.

|| Tusc. Disp. 1. 10.

ii. The Form of *Civil Government* may strengthen the disposition we are speaking of.—Despotism debases men, lowers their courage, makes them more liable to fear: gives them so little encouragement for industry, that they are apt to fix their enjoyment in different sorts of Indolence. And whatever produces Indolence, favours this Temper; Indolence always finds a lion in the way (Prov. xxii. 13.) and therefore removes out of the way; to solitudes of one sort or other. Despotic Government moreover gives a security to the generality of private individuals, which, when it cannot lead to action, finds comfort in contemplation; and makes men more fit for it than they could be, if often exposed to danger, and called upon to make resistance.

iii. *Climate* may have an effect: Heat relaxes and enervates; a large and extensive continent is less adapted to navigation, and to sea-bathing, than an Island, and has probably a tendency to soften men, and make them effeminate.

iv. The *produce* of different regions may have different effects, including under produce the breed of animals:—abundance of rice, with scarcity of barley or vines, and scarcity of animals for food, might promote monastic life: scarcity of vegetables, with plenty of animals, or of nourishing plants, might discourage it.

v. Popular *superstitions* of certain sorts generate a timorous, scrupulous temper; through them, men get to be afraid of not doing enough, they will therefore do something more than enough:—they are afraid of offending superior beings by being worldly, and therefore they avoid the world: and gradually more and more. Popular superstitions may also encourage habitual notions of the agency of invisible Beings;—I speak here of unwritten superstitions, not supposed to be revealed.

vi. *Written*



vi. *Written* religion may have the same kind of effect, if either superstitious in itself, or wrongly interpreted. It is not at all unlikely, that men, who forge Revelations, should be flighty and extravagant; should enjoin abstinence from wine, and innocent enjoyments; and should recommend very passionate devotion, communication with the Divine Mind, annihilation of worldly desires and conceptions. Nor is it impossible, that a rational Revelation should be misapplied; so that seasonable precepts about temperance, retirement, meditation and prayer, and about trust in God and resignation to his will, should be made to have the same effects \*.

More

\* The effects of retirement on the *Passions* do not seem to have been sufficiently studied. Does it, on the whole, diminish their strength?

Dr. Powell (bottom of p. 4.) says, "place a man in a situation, where they are not frequently exercised; and he is in danger of sinking into an unfeeling lethargy. Such is the situation we are considering. For the exercise of the *Passions* arises chiefly from the various turns and accidents in human affairs."—He says, the passions are the chief supports of industry, and that studious retirement impairs their vigour; (p. 6.) retirement, abstracted from pleasure, business, conversation.—But are not retired men more passionate, in some things at least, than men in active life?—more discomposed by shame, more affectionate, more compassionate? more amorous, in the purer sense of the word? would they not feel more indignation, resentment, piety, approbation, remorse? And, do not worldly men get *hardened*? are not some men of the world very unfeeling? how is this?—On the other hand, a man's *appetite* for wine, women, luxuries, gets blunted by distance and absence; his ambition seems as if it would be quieter; his avarice, his vanity, but not perhaps his pride. Is there such a distinction as this? some passions are actually weaker in solitude, but more easily roused?—that is, the man is less irritated, but more irritable?—or, could the passions be divided into classes? one class to consist of those, which flourished *most* in retirement, another, of those which flourished *least*?—I cannot now settle this matter. Dr. Powell makes *fear*, *peevishness*, &c. to flourish in *retirement*.

More particular situations might be thought of, but we do not aim at a full discussion of this matter. We may see, that there are circumstances, which strengthen the natural connexion between contemplative life, abstemiousness, and the belief of the influence of Spirits: and what is said about strengthening, we may easily change, so as to have the observation relate to weakening such connexion.

From a collective view of all the particular situations, which have been mentioned, we may conclude, that such people, as we are told live in the *East*, would most easily fall into the kind of contemplative life, of which we have been speaking. Science has not flourished there in a good form; civil Governments are despotic; the climate is hot, with large continents; the ground produces great quantities of rice; and there are many popular superstitions, of a kind suited to promote a life of contemplation, &c. — all this would make our Scriptures to be interpreted in a manner adapted to answer the same end.

12. There has always been a great resemblance in the opinions of the *East* and those of *Ægypt*; and a great communication between the two countries. *Pythagoras*\* was instrumental in this, and the Platonists, and many other persons and things: great numbers of the *Jews* also lived in *Ægypt* from the time of the first Ptolemy, about 312 years before Christ. But we must not be very particular, when particulars would carry us into long  
or

\* The ideas of Pythagoras may be had from the *Lives* of him written by Porphyry and Jamblichus: see a specimen or two in Lardner's Works Index, *Porphyry* and *Jamblichus*. See also, on this subject, Michaelis's Introd. Lect. Quarto, Sect. 100, 101, 123.



or doubtful discussions. . . . Ægypt has always been remarkable for various superstitions;—some have been drawn from the overflowing of the Nile; some, I think, from the Crocodile; if Storks were as much venerated in Ægypt, as they are in Holland, they would be worshipped.

13. In the mythology of *Greece* and *Rome*, arts and sciences, republican government, maritime war, or other causes, seem to have prevented any great progress of the temper, which we are considering, except as to superior intelligences; we may call all their Gods, Spirits or Demons, or invisible powers; unless we should make an exception in favour of an *Optimus Maximus*;—*Vestals* might be mentioned.

14. In *Europe*, science flourishes, civil governments are limited, climate is temperate, animals and nourishing plants are plentiful, and superstition is discredited; but, in some parts, interpretations of Scripture prevail, which were made in times of ignorance: on the whole, contemplative life and abstemiousness are encouraged in *popish* countries, but the notion of Spirits is in some sort checked; yet prayer is made to Saints and Angels\*.

In *England*, I could almost say, we are too little acquainted with contemplative Religion. The Monk, painted by *Sterne*, may give us a more favourable idea of it than our prejudices usually suggest. I once travelled with a *Recolet* † by water, and conversed with a *Minime* ‡ at his own Convent; and they both had that kind of character, which *Sterne* gives to his Monk: that refinement of body and mind, that pure glow of meliorated passion, that polished piety and humanity. Indeed, they both

\* Livre de l'Eglise—Reims, p. 579, in the “*Litanie des Saints*” the three Angels mentioned in Scripture are addressed.

† Aug. 14, 1770.

‡ July 10, 1771.

both seemed confined in their knowledge, and I do not say that, independent of narrowness of information, the monkish character implies perfection; only there seems to be *some* excellence in it, even supposing that excellence to be over-balanced by faults; and what there is, is of a kind, with which the common sort of Englishmen are not enough acquainted.

15. But we must mention the *Jewish Essenes*; they seem to have had the turn, we speak of, to a great degree. Philo and Josephus \* speak of them. —Perhaps some idea of what they professed, with regard to different orders of *Angels*, may be got from the cabalistic Doctrine of the ten † *Sephiroths*, or Splendors, or Irradiations; as it is highly probable that was settled before the time of Christ, the Scriptures having the same terms, which are found in the Tables of Sephiroths. “*Essenes*,” in Ægyptian, means *Physicians* (of the Soul); in Greek, Θεραπευτῶν, Therapeutæ.

16. The more instances we see, the more ready shall we be to admit, that the mixture we are considering has existed always, though with some varieties. Though *we* want it for the heresies, which sprang up in the *Christian Church*, yet we may be sure, that Christianity did not *occasion* such notions, as Christian Heretics professed. Christianity could not be said to be published, till St. Paul had written his Epistles, and in them he seems to allude to our opinions pretty frequently.

17. Now

\* See Michaelis's Introd. Lect. Sect. 122, 123, 124. Quarto.

† See Encyclopédie, Art. *Sephiroth*, taken from Calmet. ספירות in Buxt. is evolavit, maturavit: as a Subst. a Bird, a Sparrow. Chald. Morning. a *Diadem*; — and, as a verb, to surround. —These Chaldee senses are not in the younger Buxt. Lex. Chald. —Parkhurst makes a connexion amongst the senses; which agrees pretty well with the word of the Encyclopédie, *Splendeurs*; from Parkhurst's account, I am inclined to put *Irradiations*.



17. Now therefore we come to *Christian* Heretics.—And the first thing to be done is, to consider a few separate *words*, which are much made use of in speaking about spirits, or angels, or demons, by sacred or other Christian writers.—In the order of time, passages of Scripture should come before the writings of Christians; but it seems as if it would be best to go to the end of our explanations of both sorts of Heresies, before we took scriptural instances of either:—especially as most heretical opinions, professed by early Christians, had existed, in some way or other, before the Scriptures were published.

One word very frequently made use of to express one of these invisible Beings, is *αιων*, *æon*.—How this has happened, may be doubtful: I suppose Scripture has, some way or other, been the source, from which it has been drawn:—things mentioned there have been personified:—God is called Βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων, 1 Tim. i. 17.—King of the *Æons*;—in our translation, “the King eternal.”—*αιωνιος* is used for eternal, and applied to God: the etymology of *αιων* is, quasi *αειων*:—by some transition or other, *αιωνες* has been used for *Angels* or Spirits, as inferior Gods; the *Λογος* himself is called by that name, and even the one Supreme God\*:—and it happens, that some texts will bear that translation. See Eph. iii. 9.—where the Mystery of the Gospel is said to have been *hid* from *αιωνων*, ages or *Æons*, (see 1 Pet. i. 12.)—in our translation “from the beginning of the world.”—Also 1 Tim. i. 17. mentioned above.

Another word much used is *πληρωμα*; but, to give a perfectly satisfactory account of it, may not be easy. It seems to mean a *System*, *complete* in itself: and H. Stephens, I see, has a quotation from

\* *Suicer's* Thesaurus is a proper Book to consult for such words as these. *αιων*, see *Grabe's Irenæus*, p. 9. Note.

from Philo, πληρωμα και συστημα, &c. Michaelis \* uses it for an *Heaven*, that is, a *place*; but I do not find that sense in H. Stephens, Suicer, or Du Cange: yet Parkhurst comes very near it, if not quite to it.—The Easterns conceived a πληρωμα, in the sense of a system, or complete *company*, made up of God and his attendant αιωνες †: also in the sense of a *space* occupied by them: and it would be generally difficult to say, in which of these senses the word was used: for, if a man, or superior Being, was admitted into the πληρωμα, in the first sense, he would be also in the second: being admitted into a *company*, is being admitted into the *place* occupied by that company; as admission into a *family*, is admission into the *House* where that family resides.

Πληρωμα often occurs in the *Old Testament*:—the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness (πληρωμα) thereof. Some Oriental Heretics did not favour the *Old Testament*, but that did not hinder their believing, that they should be admitted into that πληρωμα, which they conceived.

The word πληρωμα seems sometimes to be used in an *indefinite* sense, as a word of *eloquence* or *passion*, or expressing something above human emptiness, vacuity, imperfection; see John i. 16. Eph. i. 23. and iii. 19. Col. i. 19. and ii. 9. Now, when this is the case, to put a definite meaning on the word, is to misinterpret it.—It is conceivable, that Revelation may use words in an indefinite sense. That ought not to set men upon indulging their imaginations.

It

\* Sect. 102, *Introd. Lect.* also Sect. 101, p. 246. bottom; and p. 247. Quarto.

† How the *Church* came to be called Pleroma, see Hammond on Rom. xi. 12. See also Eph. i. 23. It might be considered, whether πληρωμα included any idea of the Divine *Immensity*.



It seems right also to mention some words relating to contemplative Life. Μοναστήριον, a Monastery, was a word in use before the birth of Christ: at first, it was \* probably used for the habitation of one single person, in solitude or religious retirement; then, perhaps, for a row or set of cells, each of which was inhabited by a single person; afterwards it seems to have been used as synonymous to κοιτοβόριον, where several contemplatives lived together, having several things in common, as Refectory, &c. — These persons have been called † ἀναχωρηταί, anchorites, as seceding; ἐρημίται, Hermits, as being often in deserts; ἡσυχασταί ‡, as being quiet. Those, who did extraordinary things in the way of mortification, were called Ascetics; Ασκησις means exercise; exercise is natural to all, who would improve in virtue§. — The proper sense of mortification is abstaining from what is lawful; by way of exercise; in order to acquire the habit of abstinence. — Ασκησις, therefore, and mortification, stand for the same idea in religious discipline.

These are the chief terms, which want explanation, for the purpose of considering the notions of the early Christian sects. After the attention, which we have paid to the Manicheans, it seems as if it would be sufficient for our purpose to take notice of but few others. We may mention something of the *Valentinians*, and the *Marcionites* ||, and take some

\* Constantine cites *Philo*; so does Stephens.

† In Constantine, but no instance.

‡ Not in Constantine, nor H. Stephens, but in Suicer, who conceives these words to imply different *degrees* of retirement.

§ Acts xxiv. 16.

|| Valentinus and Marcion seem to have been cotemporaries, not far from the middle of the second Century. — Valentinus being in *Aegypt*, and Marcion in *Pontus*, the order, in which they should stand, may not have been well ascertained, and may not be important.

some notice of the *Gnostics*; to speak of more, would exceed the bounds of our undertaking.

18. Valentinus is said, by Cave, to have flourished about the year 120, to have been born in Ægypt, and to have been a Platonic Philosopher. Tertullian speaks of him as able, ingenio et eloquio; but says, that he quitted the regular Church through resentment, some one having been appointed to a Bishopric in preference to him, ex martyrii prærogativâ; ut solent animi pro prioratu exciti præsumptione ultionis accendi. Enough of the *Valentinians* may be seen in the first Book, one might say in the first section, of Grabe's Edition of Irenæus\*. *Thirty Æons* are reckoned up, which constitute a Pleroma; or rather fifteen *couples*, male and female; some have said these were thirty Gods; others, that all together they formed the true God. But the description of the first Æon, called Buthos, or Propator, or Proarche, &c. seems of itself to approach to a description of a Supreme God.—Each of these Æons seems to be something personified, as Life, Truth, Silence, Mind, Happiness, &c.—or one of the titles given to the Son of God; and the Genealogies seem not unlike the Theogonia of Hesiod, who makes Heaven, Earth, Ocean, Morning, Day, Night; Love, Desire, Gracefulness, &c. &c. to be, in one rank or other, Gods; besides Rivers, Winds, &c.—In some sense, it has been said†, that Hesiod makes *thirty* Gods; but certainly Valentinus made his upon Scriptural grounds, such as they were; and they made a system. He said, they corresponded to the thirty years‡, which  
our

\* There are only fragments of Irenæus's Works, besides the work against Heresies.

† Epiphan. Hær. 31. Sect. 2. &c. see Grabe's Irenæus, p. 9. Note, top.

‡ Ibid. p. 9.



our Saviour passed in private life: to the sum of the number of *Hours*, mentioned in the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard: the sum of 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, is thirty.—This seems to be the most distinguishing part of the Doctrine of Valentinus; except we should mention his idea, that the Body of Christ was real, though not really *human*; that it was brought from the Stars, and returned to them again upon his ascension. This is the more to be noticed, as it is one mode of rejecting the Scriptural accounts of our Saviour's Nativity. He held many things in common with other Oriental Heretics; concerning the inferior or malevolent nature \* of the Maker of this World, and the necessity of rejecting some Scriptures commonly held Divine: but these we shall meet with, in better order, in the Doctrines of Marcion.—Both Valentinus and Marcion were very eminent, had many Disciples of eminence, in different parts of the world; who, as well as themselves, were probably acquainted with Literature and Philosophy.

19. *Marcion* was the Son of a Bishop in Pontus†; he is thought to have flourished about the year 130. In his youth, he is said to have been excommunicated by his Father, but whether for immorality, or his doctrine, has been disputed; probably the latter. He might be unsettled in his way of life.

His Doctrine sets out on the Eastern notion of *two principles*; and, on each of these principles, is founded a set of notions: and the different notions in each set correspond to each other.—His *good* principle was the Father of *Christ*; he was benign, forgiving,

\* Cave mentions a fragment of Valentinus in a Dialogue about him, ascribed to Origen, which is to account for the origin of *Evil*, and does account for it by two principles; after the manner supposed by us, when we spoke of Mani.

† He is sometimes called, not Marcion, but *Ponticus*.

forgiving, merciful;—he was the giver of the *Gospel*. The other principle, which could not be so properly called an evil principle, as one less good, was the Δημιουργος, *Demiurge, Creator* of this world;—he was not merciful, but strict and severe, in justice at least, if not beyond justice. He was the giver of the Law; of that severe Law, which allowed of Retaliation, &c.—So that the Father of Christ was opposed to the Creator of the world; the merciful, to the severe; the giver of the Gospel, to the giver of the Law.

As to the person of Christ, Marcion was accounted one of the Phantasiasts or Docetæ; that is, one of those, who thought, that the body of Christ was only *apparently* human: yet he seems not to have carried this notion so far as some; at least, he believed in the death of Christ, and in his Resurrection. Possibly he might conceive the flesh of Christ to be somewhat different from common human flesh, without denying it to be solid, or material.

The Oriental Heretics seem to have made a great difference between \* *Jesus* and *Christ*; to have thought Jesus of a lower nature, and Christ of an higher. Marcion allowed, that Jesus was Christ; but he expected *another* Christ to come, to restore the Jewish State†.

No Heretic ever took greater liberties with the *Scriptures* than Marcion; but the liberties he took are accounted for by his tenets: he rejected the Law of *Moses*: and he made *Antitheses*, in order to expose its inferiority to the Gospel; and to shew, that they did not come from the same God.—He rejected many and very considerable parts of our  
New

\* See amongst many instances Michaelis's Introd. Lect. p. 247. Quarto.

† Before, Chap. xvii. Sect. 16. of this.



New Testament; the Temptation of Christ, in particular. He also new-modelled the Scriptural account of the Incarnation.

The *morals* of Marcion were strict and pure; he was a favourer of Virginity.—I have already said, that his Followers were numerous, and of importance. On the whole, he seems a signal example of the rashness of following human notions of what is best, in accepting and applying \* Divine Dispensations.—You will say, Marcion's fancies ought not to be represented as human reason: but they were so to him, and the notions of the wisest of men, being infinitely short of divine intelligence, may be conceived as on a footing with his, in such a comparison: and he, who sets the most improved human reason in competition with Divine Wisdom, will err in the same form with Marcion, though not perhaps in the same particulars.

20. The *Gnostics* might have been noticed first, but I was naturally led, by my train of thought, to mention them here, in like manner as to produce Scriptural examples, after the whole explication of Christian Heresies. Whatever method brings the ideas to our minds with the least confusion and embarrassment, seems the best method.—The general name will always seem most intelligible, after the particular species have been enumerated.

Bishop Warburton observes †, that *Σοφία* means “all the great principles of natural religion;” and *γνωσις* “all the great principles of the revealed.” This being settled, we can conceive, that any persons, who thought their own knowledge of the meaning of Scripture particularly profound, would imagine themselves excellent in this *γνωσις*; and, if formed into a body, which wanted a name, would call

\* Hurd's 1st Disc. on Prophecy. Powell's 3d Charge.

† A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit. p. 25.

call themselves *Gnostics*.—In fact, the persons, who did pride themselves on their superior knowledge of Scripture, ran into \* *mystical*, figurative, fantastic interpretations of Scripture, and adopted many maxims and notions of Oriental Philosophy, which they followed in settling their Canon of Scripture, as well as in giving to expressions their own sense. This was not a real *γνωσις*, but a false and spurious one; *γνωσις ψευδωνυμος* †.—*Gnostics* came, after some time, to be the *general term* for the Oriental sects taken collectively; and *Docetæ*, or *Phantasiastæ*, was used in the same sense; because all those, who affected mysterious interpretations of Holy Writ, and adopted Oriental Philosophy, held that the Body of Christ was not what it appeared to be ‡. *Hammond* seems to use the word in this general sense; and he uses it very frequently.—But we may now quit the Oriental Sects, and proceed to the *Judaical*: these will take very little time.

21. The *Judaical Sects* seem to have been but two, which may be called *Ebionites*, and *Nazarenes*.—I suppose both these sects, though undoubtedly professing the religion of *Christ*, were much attached to the *Jewish Religion*; having been bred up in it, and believing it to be of divine original: but they are distinguished by their different opinions concerning the Person of Christ: the *Ebionites* supposed him a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary: but those, who were called by the name given sometimes to Christians in general, the *Nazarenes*, though they believed him to be real, perfect *Man*, supposed him to be supernaturally born; of the Virgin,

\* See Hammond on Hebr. v. 14.

† 1 Tim. vi. 20.

‡ Tert. uses *Marcion* as a *general term* for Oriental Heretics; (see Lard. Works, Vol. ix. p. 234, Note.)—They are also often said to originate all from Simon Magus.



Virgin, by the sole operation of the Holy Spirit; yet the Nazarenes do not seem to have allowed the pre-existence of Christ\*.—As the Oriental Sects had general names, so the Judaical were *collectively* called *Ebionites*†.—I think we cannot much wonder, that the Jews should be inclined to reckon their Messiah a mere *Man*; all the Persons, whom they had most revered, had pretended to nothing higher than human Nature; Christ was to be the *Son of David*: Jesus was born of a certain tribe; nay, of an inferior person in that tribe: Christ was to be powerful, but only as a Prince.—But, though the Jews in general might have been habituated to expect a mere man for their Messiah, yet the Nazarenes might have attended to the circumstances, in which Jesus was born‡, to the Prophecies, and the Star, so much, as to adopt the opinion, that his birth was miraculous.—The Judaical Sects are said to be older than the Oriental; though § the Oriental subsisted in the times of the Apostles.

22. Some Heresies have an appearance of being *mixed*; their doctrines *compounded* of Oriental and Judaical tenets; if we include in the *Judaical* such as arose amongst the *Essenes*: and the *Essenes* were certainly a *Jewish* Sect, though they adopted *Ægyptian* or *Oriental* Philosophy. The Heresy of *Cerintus*, a *Jew*, of *Asia*, may be of this mixed sort.

What

\* Except as a *man*: according to John ix. 1, 2, they allowed, that Christ might have a remembrance that he, as *man*, had conversed with God before his birth.—See Macknight on John ix. 1, 2.

† Eusebius makes two *sorts* of Ebionites. (Hist. 3. 27.)

‡ They might also attend more to current notions of *Λογος*, Son of God, &c. as explained by Allix—Unitarians—but of this more in the fourth book. They might also see some very lofty expressions in some of the *Prophecies*: see Apthorp's *Warb. Lecture*.

§ Lard. Works, Vol. 3. p. 541, 542—incl. Notes.

What he held, concerning Spirits, &c. may be solved, possibly, either from *Oriental* Philosophy, or from *Jewish* Cabalistical *Sephiroths*\*.—And this remark may, perhaps, be applicable to *Carpocrates*.—Some Jewish Christians had some notion of the world's being made by some inferior Demiurge; but, if *Essenes* drew their notions from *Ægyptian* or *Oriental* Philosophy, as they were *Jews*, it seems a matter of course, that the *Oriental* and *Jewish* tenets should get mixed: generally, when *Oriental* Heretics are opposed to *Judaical*, it is not, I think, meant to reckon the *Essenes* amongst the *Jews*. Though they might be as much for retaining the Law of Moses as the *Ebionites*. I should conceive, that, when any difficulties arise from a seeming mixture of *Oriental* and *Judaical* tenets, the best solution would be, to ascribe that mixture to the *Jewish* Sect of *Essenes* having adopted some *Oriental* tenets, at the same time that they continued attached to *Judaism*.

23. Having now gone through the particular tenets of the *Oriental* and *Judaical* Heresies, we may take some notice of the *extent* of those tenets; we may observe, that some opinions seem to have been held generally; others only by particular sects, or persons:—all seem, in early times of Christianity, notwithstanding the prevalence of *Polytheism* in the world, to have acknowledged *one* supreme, benevolent Deity. Nay, those who maintained two principles, only maintained an evil one, in order that they might clear the good God from all blame.—Most Eastern and some *Jewish* Heretics seem to have had unfavourable ideas of *matter*, which would naturally lead them to doubt the reality

\* See Lardner's account of Cerinthus, partic. Sect. 4.—Works, Vol. ix. p. 325. see also Mich. Introd. Lect. Sect. 101. p. 247. Quarto.



reality of the Body of Christ, as human flesh;—and to question first his Resurrection, and then the general resurrection: and lastly, to suppose the material world made by subordinate Beings, with only the tacit consent or connivance of the Supreme. Then, these subordinate Beings must be Spirits, which would require classing, and so must have names.—The belief, that Christ would be received into those heavenly *Orbs*, from which he was thought to have been taken, was more general than we should easily imagine.

All Sects seem to have been charged with immoralities, and none collectively to have been guilty.

Making free with Scriptures was very general, but much more so amongst the Oriental sects than amongst the Judaical: it appears more strange to us, that men should reject Scriptures, than it would do if separate Gospels were handed about in manuscript, and those such, that a much greater number ought to be rejected than received\*.

Though some opinions were held generally, yet we find several *varieties* amongst those, of whom we are speaking.—By some, Christ was called a mere *man*, by others a real *Person*: some believed in a number of *Æons*, others *matter* eternal, and no *Æon*: some held *two* co-eternal principles; others one eternal principle, who created a second principle: some made Melchisedec to be an *Æon*; and who can expect uniformity, or an end of varieties, where the imagination does all, and has free scope?—the ideas of the Valentinians and Manicheans occur most frequently, and therefore have been here most particularly described.—As there were varieties in doctrinal points, so there might be some in practical or moral; but imputations are seldom to be credited. Basilides, it is said, made  
all

\* See before, Chap. xii. Sect. 4.

all actions *indifferent*; perhaps, at bottom, this might be nothing more than that he thought a man might be a good Christian married as well as unmarried.—He was charged with slighting the Fear of God, and the Fear of God sometimes means Religion in general: Nothing more, perhaps, was strictly true, than his exhorting his followers to aim at some Love of God, perhaps, ultimately, at that perfect Love, which \* casteth out Fear.—Nevertheless, it seems possible, that some Gentile converts might attempt to retain some impure rites of Paganism, when they turned to Christianity: but I have not seen it proved, that any *did*. The † *Nicolaïtans* are spoken of, as having committed some wicked “*deeds*,” as having, in some sense, committed fornication, (if ver. 20 of Rev. Clap. ii. relates to them) but fornication often means only *Idolatry*.

Varieties in rejecting *Scripture*, have already appeared. But the principal observation, relative to the differences of opinion amongst the early sects, is this; those, who asserted two principles, denied the humanity of Christ; those, who held one single principle, allowed his humanity, but denied his Divinity: the reason of this might not be intuitively clear to those, who had not entered into our present subject; but, if we reflect on what has been said, we may see how hatred of matter leads to denying, that Christ had a material body; and how the Jews, who were distinguished by their belief in the unity of God, might be led to think their Messiah nothing greater than a powerful *Man*.

24. We now come to look at a few texts of *Scripture*, with the ideas resulting from what has been said.—But it may be as well to resume our division

\* 1 John iv. 18.

† Rev. ii. 6, 15, 20.

‡ Lard. Her. Book i. Sect. 5.



division of early Heretics; into *Oriental*, *Judaical*, and *mixed*.

First, we will mention a few passages, which seem to refer to *Oriental* Heresies: these passages may be either such as are of considerable length, or single texts.—St. John's Gospel seems to have been written under a sense of Oriental errors; so does his first Epistle, and his Book of Revelation. St. Paul seems to allude to them, in his Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians\*, Colossians, and to Timothy, and Titus; and these compositions will seem the less obscure, if we are accustomed to Oriental notions. Particular *single texts*, to be read in the *original*, as well as the Translation, may be the following.—Eph. i. 21.—iii. 10.—vi. 12.—Col. i. 16.—ii. 18.—1 Tim. i. 4.—iv. 1, 7.—vi. 20.—2 Tim. ii. 16—18.—Tit. iii. 9.—1 John iv. 2, 3.

In these, we may observe several of the orders of *Angels* mentioned in the Jewish *Sephiroths*;—references to the *Genealogies* of *Æons*, spoken of here as taught by *Valentinus*, and to the doctrine of *Demons*; and other profane and silly *fables*. In 1 Tim. vi. 20. besides spurious *γνῶσις*, we find mention of *Antitheses*, which may have been such as Marcion is said to have composed†. The *Docetæ* seem to be clearly pointed out, 1 John iv. 2, 3.

It

\* See Hammond on Phil. iii. 2. But, if it should be doubted, whether any passages in the Epistle to Philippians do allude to Oriental Heresies, a doubt in that case might lead to remarking, in general, the difference between those Epistles, which are addressed to European Churches, and such as are addressed to the Churches in Asia; I mean, in respect to the allusions now under consideration; allusions to *Oriental* notions: If the Epistles to Corinth, Thessalonica, &c. contain no such allusions, and those to Ephesus, Colossæ, Crete, (where Titus was Bishop, as Timothy was at Ephesus) contain several, we probably do not imagine allusions, where there really were none.

† Sect. 19.

It might answer the same purpose with looking at these texts, to read some part of *Parkhurst's* exposition of Πληρωμα; particularly the 9th and 10th senses of that word: also Sir I. Newton on Prophecies\*, Part 1. Chap. 13. and Lord King's Critical History of the Creed; quoted by Benson, on 1 Tim. i. 4.

25. But, having only mentioned in a cursory manner, that St. *John's Gospel* seems to have been written with a feeling of heretical errors, it seems proper, and likely to make our ideas of our present subject more definite, to resume that observation; especially as some very learned and respectable writers† have been of a different opinion. The first question, which occurs, is concerning the *time* when St. John wrote his Gospel: John the Evangelist is supposed to have *died* about the end of the first century, at a great age, some say 94; many have been of opinion, that he wrote and published his *Gospel*, very late in life; but Lardner seems to give good reasons for judging, that it was written and published before or about the destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 70; he thinks, that it probably was written and published about the year 68, after the other Gospels and the Acts, which last, he thinks, might be published about 63 or 64; and after St. Paul's Epistles, which, he thinks, might have been published between the years 52 and 63. He is of opinion, that St. John's *Epistles*, and his Book of Revelation were published late in life, from the year 80 to 95 or 96.—Out of this question arises that, with which we are chiefly concerned,

One objection to the opinion, that St. John's Gospel was published so early as the year 68, is, that

\* Vol. 5. p. 416, Ed. Horsley. † Lardner, Lampe, &c.



that the ancients thought \* he wrote against Heretics, against Gnostics more than other sects, and against Cerinthus more than other Herefiarchs; whereas, the year 68 was too early for this. Now, to this objection two answers might be given; the first, that he did not write against Heretics; the second, that, if he did, he might write as early as the year 68. It seems to me, that St. John did write with *some* reference to Heretics, and yet that he did publish his Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem, or about that time.—He might write, as Lardner, &c. say he did, in order to prove, that the Jews were blameable in rejecting Jesus as their Messiah, and yet, at the same time, he might endeavour to rectify wrong conceptions concerning him.

The time of Cerinthus is uncertain; there is a story, that St. John went to a Bath at Ephesus, but finding Cerinthus in the Bath, retired, with some expressions of indignation or horror; this story is told by Irenæus†, as having been heard (by some uncertain persons) from Polycarp‡, whom Irenæus had known something of in his youth, and who had been a disciple of St. John.—The story does not gain universal credit, but yet it seems as if Irenæus would not have told it, if it had contained

\* See Lard. Works, Vol. ii. p. 161. Vol. vi. p. 210, 211. Lardner says, that Heresies may be *refuted* by St. John's Gospel, and yet it may not have been written on purpose *to* refute them. Irenæus says expressly, in one place, (see Lard. Works, Vol. vi. p. 211.) that St. John wrote after Cerinthus: in another, he says, St. John wrote, foreseeing the errors, which then, in the time of Irenæus, (178), would prevail; but does the latter saying contradict the former? why might not St. John foresee the Heresies, which would prevail in the time of Irenæus, from the errors of Cerinthus prevailing in his own time?—a supernatural foreseeing is not to be supposed; non est dignus Deo Vindice Nodus.

† Placed A. D. 178.

‡ Placed A. D. 108.

tained a gross anachronism; and he was near enough to the time of St. John, to form a pretty good judgment of that:—his telling the story seems also to afford a presumption, that St. John did consider Cerinthus as an heretic; and a proof that, in the judgment of Irenæus, he did.—On the whole, the opinion, that St. John might write against Cerinthus, seems full as probable as the contrary opinion. And it is generally thought, that there were heretics before Cerinthus, as the Ebionites, and the followers of Simon Magus: St. John himself mentions the Nicolaïtans. The writings of *Ignatius* \* help to prove the antiquity of Heresy.

But, let us put the supposition, that there were no heretics known by *name*, when St. John wrote his Gospel, whenever that was, it does not seem to me to follow, that St. John did not write against Heretics. Heretical opinions flourish, before they are formed into a system, and professed by such a number of people, that it is inconvenient for them to be without a name; there is more unwritten heresy (and we might say the same of superstition, enthusiasm, and even of notions and principles unconnected with religion) than written, at any time: there can be no doubt but that, before our Saviour began to teach, there were followers of the Oriental Philosophy, and there were Essenes; these would give attention to Religion, especially to a teacher in the wilderness, like John the Baptist, who lived a life of religious austerity; these would incline to receiving Christianity, but would not give up entirely their old notions and habits;—nor can I conceive any time, after the beginning of our Saviour's Ministry, when there would not be Jews, inclining to become Christians, yet thinking with reluctance of deserting their old religion:

it

\* Placed A. D. 107.



it does not seem to be sufficiently attended to, that Jews would not think of becoming Christians, if they were not religiously disposed; and, if they were so, they could not but be strongly attached to the religion, in which they and their fathers had been bred up; especially as it was a religion strikingly preferable to any in the then world, and indisputably divine: add, that Christianity might be imperfectly published.—When we reason in this train, it must seem very probable, that the *doctrines* of Cerinthus, and of the *Judaizing* converts, Ebionites, existed before St. John wrote his Gospel, whether Cerinthus himself professed them so soon, or not.—I have no doubt but St. *Paul* wrote against Gnostics, as well as against Judaizers; yet Lardner considers the last of St. Paul's Epistles as written five years before the Gospel of St. John: and, if Lardner is the author of the last section of the first Book of the Work on Heresies\*, he favoured the opinion, that the Heresies had their origin in the times of the Apostles;—which opinion is confirmed by the passages quoted in the 6th section of the same book, before referred to † in this Appendix. Particularly, *Tertullian* says, “*Hæc sunt, ut arbitror, genera doctrinarum adulterinarum, quæ sub Apostolis fuisse, ab ipsis Apostolis discimus;*” mentioning the *two* sorts, under the general names of *Marcion* and *Hebion*.

We have before ‡ just mentioned a sort of half Christians, who had received only the Baptism of John, possibly under Apollos§, a Jew of Alexandria,

\* Mr. Hogg wrote part of the work upon *Heresies*. See the Preface to it.

† Sect. 20.

‡ Sect. 5. See Acts xix. Voltaire, 4to. Vol. xxvi. p. 111. Michaelis's Introd. Lect. Sect. 125. Quarto.

§ The connexion between Apollos, Acts xviii. and the twelve who had only had John's Baptism, Acts xix. is not, that I see, expressed,

dria, where the Essenes flourished much. Though these might have some notion of preparing themselves for Christianity, yet it is probable they had an high veneration for the Baptist, and would be inclined to mould the religion of Christ into some form like that, to which they had been accustomed. It has been thought, that they had lived in some desert, and had been some kind of Solitaries or Monks; a sort of *Encratitæ*. There might not be any others, who had never heard of the effusion of the Holy Ghost; but there might be many, who had too great a veneration for John Baptist, and who mistook his rank and office: in allusion to these, St. John the Evangelist might say those things, which occur in his Gospel, and which have seemingly a tendency to *lower* \* some ideas of the Baptist entertained by his Disciples.

The great difficulty, after all, is that which arises from certain words being found in the Gospel of St. John, used as sort of *titles*, which are the names of the Valentinian *Æons*. Such as Logos †, Zoë, Φως, Monogenes, Charis, Aletheia:—are these terms first used by St. John? are they borrowed by Valentinus from St. John? or did both St. John and Valentinus take them from some system? (Heathen, Jewish, or made by some Christian before St. John wrote?) I own, I am most inclined

to expressed, but it seems probable; it was, surely, a singular thing; these twelve must have lived in some remote place, otherwise they would have heard of the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Jerusalem; and what place so likely as the neighbourhood of Alexandria; the country of Apollos?

\* John i. 20, &c. from i. 19. to ii. 11. See Michaelis, Sect. 102, 103. Quarto.

† Logos, John i. 1. Zoë, i. 4. & passim. vi. 63. xi. 25. xiv. 6. Monogenes, i. 14, 18. Φως, i. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. Charis, i. 14, 16. Aletheia, i. 14. xiv. 6.. Pleroma, i. 16. Law opposed to Christ, i. xvii. Spiritus, vi. 63. Anastasis, xi. 25. Hodot? xiv. 6.



to the supposition, that both St. John and Valentinus took names from the same system. Why may not the case of St. Paul be a parallel one? we find in St. Paul orders of Angels called Thrones, Dominions, Principalities\*, Powers; we find the same in the Jewish Sephiroths; were these names first used by St. Paul? are they borrowed from him by the Jewish Cabalists? or did he borrow from them? or have *both* drawn from some common source? as it is not credible, that the Jewish Cabalists should borrow from St. Paul, or St. Paul from them, we must conclude, that both borrowed from some common stock:—why then may we not look upon the cases of St. John and St. Paul as similar? especially as St. John wrote later than St. Paul?—I must own, that the expressions in question seem more natural to me in the way of allusions, than in the light of original expressions.—I would not be understood to mean, that the Valentinian *Æons* are exactly the same with the titles in St. John; variations easily arise in such matters; and I do not find  $\Phi\omega\varsigma$  in the System of Valentinus, which occurs frequently† in St. John; but  $\Phi\omega\tau\alpha$  are Spirits in the *Ægyptian Philosophy*‡, which is still more to our purpose, as it points out the *common source*. Besides, the Valentinian System might easily differ from that of other Gnostics.

On the whole, it seems to me, that a person, who kept in mind the tenets of the early Heretics, would read St. John's Gospel with more of the spirit, in which it was written, than one who did not.

26. We might ask, whether St. Peter and St. Jude§, when they mention *fallen Angels*, are to be considered as referring to any System of Philosophy,

\* Col. i. 16. † Chap. i. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9.

‡ See Mich. Sect. 100, 101. Quarto. § 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.

sophy, or of Judaism? or to some revealed truth? if to the last, where that revealed truth was found? or how it may be supposed to have been communicated to the Apostles? \*—if to some system, whether the Apostles urged the Fall of Angels, in the way of an argumentum ad hominem?—but we will content ourselves with saying, that no regular History of this Fall seems wanted by Christians, or by men; though he, who composed the Book of Enoch, might think such an History desirable. It might not be amiss for any one, who was thinking on this subject, to read Locke on Ephes. i. 10.—iii. 10.—and vi. 12. Bishop Watson, as Regius Professor of Theology, has maintained in the Schools, that the Fall of Angels is taught in Scripture, and is not contrary to Reason†.

27. But it is time, that we should take notice of parts of Scripture, which refer to *Judaical Heresies*. Of these there can be no doubt; the whole Epistle to the *Galatians* is intended to rectify the error of those, who would mix Judaism with Christianity: and the same may be said of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*.—We may also look at Phil. iii. Col. ii. 11. &c.—at Titus iii. 9.—and Heb. vii. 12. but this is reasoning, not allusion, and therefore need not be insisted on at present.—As to texts against the *Ebionites*, I am not aware of any but the

\* Voltaire (4to. Vol. 27. p. 408, and elsewhere) says, that no *History* of the fall of the Angels can be found any where but in the *Book of Enoch*.

† I see now (in 1796), from Mr. Marsh's Translation of Michaelis's 4th Edition, Vol. 1. p. 237, that Michaelis set aside, or rejected out of the Canon of Scripture, the Epistle of Jude: but I cannot think, that, so ignorant as we are of the particular notions of those, to whom Jude wrote, any mere *allusions* can afford sufficient ground for setting aside the evidence of Antiquity in favour of the Epistle; even though those allusions contain something of persuasion, or argument, grounded upon what the persons addressed would be ready to allow.



the declarations of the dignity of the Person of Christ, and such as are of a mixed nature, that is, such as allude to both Oriental and Jewish Heresy. The declarations of the Dignity of Christ, are so general, that any person, inclined to dispute, might question their particular reference to the Ebionites. But it seems to me, that Scripture is all, or nearly all, occasional, and therefore, that a good Interpreter will always be ready to admit particular applications of general expressions.

28. I look upon those references in Scripture to early Heresies, which we should call *mixed*, as being the most numerous; because in most, or all, newly settled Churches, there would of course be Judaizing Christians, as well as those, who were tinctured with the Eastern Philosophy; and because those, who had been Essenes, might be considered as holding the principles of Oriental and Judaical Heresy united. The same general expressions in the sacred writings might include both; Angels would imply both those of the Jews, and those of the Easterns, or Ægyptians, and the same is true of abstinence, mortification, celibacy, &c. It seems to have been the mixture we are speaking of, which has occasioned difficulties and disputes; one interpreter referring expressions to one kind of Heresy, another to another kind; and this mixture, if once understood and admitted, would solve difficulties, and seemingly would remove all occasion of dispute.

St. John's Gospel may be intended to refute Ebionites as much as Gnostics; Cerinthus was probably something of both:—and, if we review the passages already cited, we shall find some mixture in most of them; and, if we look into comments, we shall find, that such mixture has occasioned controversy, but that it has not been observed and allowed.—Here, therefore, we close what we had  
to

to say upon Scripture, as receiving explanation from ancient Heresies.

29. But, when we set out with this subject, we observed, that it would prepare us for reading, not only the Scriptures, but the ancient Christian *Fathers*: a very great part of their employment was opposing Heresy, therefore a knowledge of Heresy must throw great light upon their expressions.—Moreover, a mature consideration of the nature of ancient heresies, would prevent our being misled, by those calumnies and misrepresentations, which indiscreet zeal has occasioned\*.—A right idea of the purity of Oriental morality, would make us very backward to credit accounts of impurities in the Gnostic Sects: though we might admit, that their very purity might make them, thinking no evil, use the assistance of female Disciples, in preaching, or in any of the sacred ministerial functions.

30. An insight into the nature of Heresy would make us *candid* to those writers, who differed from us; we should acknowledge, that no other cause of Heresy need be assigned, than a desire of solving difficulties, which have perplexed the generality of those, who have considered them: at least, no other than this, helped forward with a little vanity, and partiality for one's own inventions.

And reflexion on our present subject would make us, as we were reading any ancient Christian Author, constantly distinguish between an error professed, and one charged by adversaries upon those, who did not profess it.—Nay, such reflexion would suggest apologies for the very authors, whose accounts we thought ourselves obliged to set aside: when we compared times, places, customs, traditions, and saw the imperfect Records they had to  
judge

\* See Bayle's *Cainites*; Lard. Works, Vol. ix. p. 246.



judge from, and how natural it was for them, in their trying situations, to be agitated with zeal; we should feel an apprehension, that we, under the same disadvantages, might have run into more faulty excesses than they did.

31. We may *conclude* this Appendix, by letting our eye glance from remote antiquity to Heresy of more modern date. Montanus, Praxeas, and others, ran off gradually from the Eastern Philosophy, though one somewhat less visionary remained. Indeed Mani persevered in the old Philosophy, but his attachment was singular; he was a Persian. There seem always to have been heresies about the Person of Christ, because his Incarnation is something above our comprehension; had that been acknowledged, perhaps controversy and Heresy might have ceased; but it only occasioned new endeavours to solve and explain, and therefore new Heresies. Regular, professed disputes about the consubstantiality of the Son of God with the Father, did not rage till the time of Arius, pretty early in the fourth Century; and the different solutions of the Incarnation, offered by Nestorius and Eutyches, occupied the fifth and sixth Centuries, with the help of the Pelagian Controversy, concerning the principles of human agency.—About the same time, many Heresies were new formed and fashioned out of those, which had gone before. In the seventh Century the Orthodox notion of “One Christ,” or of the Unity of his Person, pressed forcibly, struck out the sect of Monothelites\*; and, in the eighth, the difficulties attending the Incarnation gave

\* Cave's names of the 16 centuries. 1. Apostolicum. 2. Gnosticum. 3. Novatianum. 4. Arianum. 5. Nestorianum. 6. Eutychianum. 7. Monotheliticum. 8. Eiconoclasticum. 9. Photianum. 10. Obscurum. 11. Hildebrandinum. 12. Waldense. 13. Scholasticum. 14. Wicklevianum. 15. Synodale. 16. Reformatum.

gave rise to the Adoptionarii. In the 9th, the Christian world was divided about the procession of the Holy Ghost, and the Pelagian Controversy got revived. Afterwards, controversy turned upon the Sacraments; and various Heresies sprung up. Since that time, the growing errors and oppressions of the Church of Rome have divided men into parties, and those have been most branded as Heretics, who have separated from her.

In our own days, we are only reviving old Heresies, and saying the same things over again; with as much spirit and animosity, as if they had never been said before.





B O O K II.  
OF POLEMICAL DIVINITY.

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C H A P. I.

OF THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CONTRO-  
VERSY.

I. **T**HE right method of conducting debates or controversies seems to be one of the subjects, which every man should attend to, who means to study all things useful for a Divine. Suppose him never to engage in controversy himself, yet, in reading with a mere view to acquiring knowledge, he must peruse many controversial writers; arguments of the greatest weight, urged with the greatest spirit, are to be found in them; and he will not fail to receive some sort of bad impressions from them, if he comes to read them without any fixed principles; impressions of party malevolence, of indiscreet zeal, or perhaps of *disgust* for religion.

But if he, at any time, engages in the defence of religious truth (what he thinks such), against error and heresy, he will want right notions of controversy still more: without them, he will be sure to hurt the general interests of Religion, if not the particular interests of that cause, which he undertakes to defend.

Whether, therefore, Controversy be thought an evil or a good (it may be made either), the nature and effects of it should be considered; and no opportunity

portunity seems better for *us* to consider it, than the present: after we have gone through that part of Theology, which relates to all Christians in common, and before we come to the distinguishing doctrines of particular sects:—in what is past, we have some controversy with infidels; in what is to come, we may have much more with our Christian Brethren. The Rules of Controversy, before we had seen any thing of religious dispute, would have been uninteresting: and, to delay them till we had finished all subjects of discussion, would be to lose many good opportunities of using and applying them.

2. Controversy may be made a *good* or an *evil*, as it is used: all seem to allow, that it has its advantages, and its mischiefs: what would be most desirable, would be, to avoid the mischiefs, and to acquire the advantages;—but it may be questioned, whether that be *possible*, in the nature of things.—Dr. Powell delivered a Charge on the subject of lessening the faults of Controversy, to his Archdeaconry, in which he says, “it does not seem possible to remove the mischiefs, and at the same time preserve the advantages\*.” which may rather mean, that it is not to be expected, or that it is inconceivable, on a footing of experience and probability, than that it is, strictly speaking, impossible. “The advantages,” says this most able writer, “arise from the debates themselves, the evils, wholly or principally, from the faults of those, who conduct them†:”—as nearly, therefore, as those faults can be conceived to be remedied, so nearly can we conceive ourselves to approach to perfect controversy.—The *conception* of a controversy wholly beneficial, is not an absurd conception;

\* Powell's Discourses, p. 298.

† Ibidem.



tion; in theory there is such a controversy, whatever there may be in practice.

I do not see, that this assertion contradicts any thing that Dr. Powell says; but the very *appearance* of contradicting him is unpleasant; as I have a much greater opinion of his judgment than of my own.—Permit me to recommend his work to your perusal: it is worthy of a perusal of the most attentive kind: indeed, we scarce ever see the merit of his writing on the first reading; but, when we look back calmly on what he has said, and examine every expression, as well as the manner in which his thoughts are connected together, then we perceive, that nothing could be said more properly, more clearly, more convincingly, or more beautifully. We find all the discretion and accuracy of age, and all the warmth of youthful Benevolence; all the precision and correctness of the man of science and erudition, with all the propriety and practicability (if I may so speak) of the man of the world.—I am, at all times, ready to pay this tribute to his worth, but most desirous of paying it, when I seem in any way to differ from him.—It is but of little consequence to add, that what I shall say, will resemble what he says, in many things, though taken chiefly from some papers, which I wrote ten years, I suppose, before his volume was published.—But to return.

3. Though the idea of a controversy wholly beneficial, may not be absurd, yet, perhaps, it may be thought useless. Where is the good, many are apt to say, of amusing ourselves with Utopian schemes of imaginary perfection? But it seems to me, as if studying ideal perfection might generally be made useful, even when the actual attainment of it is not to be expected.—This seems to be allowed in physics, where we speak of bodies as perfectly

perfectly elastic; of the air-pump, and of the flight of projectiles, as if there was a perfect vacuum, when really the effect of the atmosphere is considerable. It is also allowed in the fine arts, as appears from the discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which are capable of being extended beyond painting, to poetry, music, or to the fine arts in general.—I do not see why studying ideal perfection would not be equally useful in researches concerning civil Government\*, Laws, education: practical rules, formed upon ideas of perfection, would be the most effectual and successful; would be most likely to promote perpetual improvement, and a perpetual approach towards perfection in reality.—Nor does any reason appear, why the same effects should not follow, from studying ideal perfection in controversy.—To press forward† to ideal perfection in morals, seems to be an endeavour truly Christian.—In the last Chapter of the preceding Book, we ventured to imagine, how men might possibly have improved, by reason and experience, without Revelation, thinking, that even such imagination might have its use. If we settle what perfection is, we may still fall short of it; but all our endeavours will be rightly employed; whereas, if we aim at something wrong, then even our diligence will lead us farther and farther from what is right.

4. There is the more need of imagining to ourselves a faultless controversy, as prejudices have been entertained against religious controversy in general; some men seem to speak of it, as if it were essentially and radically evil;—and, while such prejudices

\* I look upon Mr. Hume's "Idea of a perfect Commonwealth," to be an useful political Essay. The Americans may have found it such. I once wrote on penal laws, on the same plan.

† See Luke xvi. 16. and 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. also Phil. i. 9. and iii. 13. and the conclusion of St. Peter's 2d Epistle.



prejudices prevail, it will be difficult to get men to study it calmly, and regulate it to the best advantage. Common-place abuse weighs but little with a thinking man, but we would wish all men to join in improving religious controversy. Sometimes, we hear even the Clergy \* inveighing against polemic Divines, as if they were public nuisances, and as if nothing good was to be attained, but by a total forbearance from debate and discussion.

How is this prejudice to be cured? those, who entertain it, should be called upon to *think*, whether there is really any thing wrong or hateful in discussing the difficulties, which attend researches into religion? or, whether what disgusts them is any thing more than the *incidental* evil, which arises from such discussion, when carried on in a *faulty* manner?—There is, to be sure, much *acrimony* in religious dispute, and much *perplexity* arises from it to the reader, and much *scandal* to the people†; but, need this be so?—may not men speak the truth ‡ in *Love*? may they not peaceably oppose each other in argument, and, when they fail of mutual conviction, practice mutual forbearance§?—if this were done, no scandal would arise, and perplexity would soon be changed into mild resignation to the ignorance necessarily attendant on limited faculties.

There have been disputes on other subjects, besides Religion, without so much being said against them; even on Mathematics themselves; and, seemingly, the more loose and indefinite disputes have been, the greater acrimony they have occasioned.

That

\* See Warburton on the Holy Spirit, p. 309.

† Our Homily must be supposed to refer to *fact*, when it says, “Among all kinds of contention, none is more hurtful than is contention in matters of Religion.” Homily 12th.

‡ Eph. iv. 15.

§ Eph. iv. 2.

That is, where the most diffidence has been required, there the least has been shewn. This is observable of *political* disputes in particular.—It is folly, no doubt; but shall it hinder men from trying the force of each others reasonings by opposition? no, the faults should be proscribed, but the reasonings preserved.

Though there is incidental evil arising from religious controversy, there is also *incidental good*: this is so well described by Dr. Powell, that I cannot do better than refer you to his Charge\*. Now, as we suffer the incidental good of other disputes to take off our prejudices against them, it seems hard, that we should not do the same in religious disputes.—Opposition to the measures of the English Ministry, in whom is lodged the executive power, when shewn in parliamentary debates, according to theory, must seem inconsistent with Loyalty and Allegiance; but our feeling, that it has incidentally been the means of preserving many rights of the subject, and occasioning much improvement, mitigates our aversion to it, and almost clears it of blame.—Attention to the incidental good effects of religious disputes might produce the same indulgence.

5. There seems to be an inconsistency in our manner of treating those, who are *Advocates* in courts of justice: the popular clamour is, that they will maintain any thing, right or wrong, &c.—and yet they are not, in fact, abhorred or avoided; they are received as private friends, and promoted to be public deciders of contentions about our most important rights. How can this be accounted for, but from some secret persuasion in our own minds, the nature of which we do not distinctly see, that what appears wrong at first sight, is capable of some

\* Powell's Discourses, p. 295—297.



some justification? Let us suppose an advocate to make an Apology for his conduct; it may be the means of introducing into our minds a favourable idea of controversy in general.

‘ You accuse me of neglecting *truth*; I have no concern with truth; the care of that belongs solely to the *Judge*: the business of the whole court of Judicature is, indeed, to see to the bottom of a difficult question, but that end will be best attained, if I am employed merely to search out arguments on one side, and the Advocate, who is opposed to me, those on the other; and the Judge has no labour but that of comparing our Arguments together. The Judge must wish it to be so; it cannot be his desire to have both to find out the arguments, and to balance them: and the Advocate must wish it so; as it would be very difficult, and very rash, for him to attempt a balancing of arguments, before he knew what would be thrown into the scale opposite to his own.—Besides, to plead and to judge, require different *faculties*; if I attempt to judge, I damp my invention, and some forcible argument will be lost, or missed: inventing, inforcing, arranging, may occupy the mind, so as to leave it very little power of judging.—And, if the Judge attempts to invent, or inforce, he becomes prejudiced in favour of his own inventions, he gets heated, and his powers of judging are greatly impaired.’

6. What has now been said, in the person of the Advocate, with regard to controversies in Courts of Justice, may be made general, or applied to controversies of all kinds. In debating any question, there are *three* departments; the *for*, the *against*, and the *determination*. If he, who has the first committed to him, has nothing to do but to find out and inforce arguments on one side, he will exhibit

exhibit a stronger body of argument on that side, than could be furnished in any other way; and the same is true of him, whose task is to produce arguments on the other side; both these persons may be heated, and may be prejudiced, each in favour of his own arguments; but such prejudices will be in a great measure removed by him, who has the third department. If he has his judgment perfectly cool, his mind free from all fatigue and hurry, his opinion unbiassed, he will be able to make a much better decision, than if he had taken all the departments to himself; besides that his views will be much more deep and comprehensive\*.

7. For the sake of simplicity, we speak as if one department was of course committed to one person only: but this need not be always the case; sometimes great advantage may be reaped from a *number* being concerned in each department: in a number, there will be animation, and at the same time discretion: each individual catches spirit from the rest, by sympathy or emulation; and yet each hinders the others from indulging their peculiar fancies.— Besides, it sometimes happens, that, in order to spread truth, you must overturn † *error*; this may require great *courage* and *force*; for men are often tenacious of their errors, and exasperated when their prejudices are attacked; a single individual may fail in this task, when a number may succeed.

8. It is possible, that considerable good might be attained in the investigation of Truth, by the for and against and the determination being kept separate, though we suppose the three parties to have

\* In making watches (the nicest of machines), I suppose one man gives himself up to one part, another to another, and, at last, one is wholly employed in putting the parts *together*: The separation of tasks seems still more needful, where some of them disqualify the mind for others.

† Dr. Powell says something to this purpose, p. 296, 297.



have *different interests*; but it does not seem, as if controversy would arrive to *perfection*, till these three came to *co-operate*, and to act as different members of the same *society*, under the guidance of a common understanding. The only difficulty would be, to give them sufficient force and energy; there would be a temptation to remissness, if no real opposition of views and interests subsisted. And this may be the ground of the opinion, that we cannot have the advantages of controversy, without its mischiefs.

On account of this difficulty, it may be worth while to distinguish Controversy into *voluntary* and *involuntary*.—*Voluntary* is when the parties do not decidedly *differ*, as to the matter in question, but have *doubts* in common, which they wish to have cleared up by debate; involuntary is when, from the beginning, there are two opposite opinions, and each party expects his own opinion to appear the most true, after the discussion: this sort I call *involuntary*, because no party chuses to have his opinion controverted, and each is driven into a dispute, by a desire to defend what he thinks the truth.—Voluntary controversy has been often made a part of *education*; or an exercise for minds grown to maturity, which may be considered as a sort of education in a more extensive sense\*.—From what may be seen (especially in foreign countries) of the spirit, with which scholastic disputations are carried on, we may form an idea how even voluntary controversy may be animated, or even raised to the vigour and energy of involuntary. There seems to want nothing but public celebrities, in which emulation and love of honour or fear of shame are called forth; where applause and victory are rewards, followed sometimes, perhaps, by what are commonly

\* Is an amicable suit in Chancery any thing like voluntary controversy? or is it mere form, as to the controversial part?

commonly thought more substantial distinctions.—Involuntary controversialists seldom want a spur, but if, at any time, they should, they might be made the Champions of two opposite parties. In the natural course of improvement, involuntary controversy would keep approaching nearer and nearer to the form and disposition of voluntary; in which form it ought, if possible, always to be carried on.

9. We will *conclude* this Chapter with giving, from what has been said, an *idea* of an useful controversy; though a controversy may take place in such various circumstances, that it may be difficult to use general expressions, which shall not belong to one sort more than to another. A controversy may be verbal or written; or, it may be partly one and partly the other. It may take up a few hours, or it may take up twenty years; and so on:—but the candid will make allowances for expressions, that seem to suit one sort more than another. All the parties concerned, then, set out with a strong and ardent love of *truth*: they are all sensible of *difficulties*, and they think a free debate would be the most likely means of clearing them up. They agree to unite in trying this method; they lay down a *proposition*, containing the subject to be discussed: they give to a due number of persons, duly qualified, the task of inventing and enforcing all possible arguments *for* that proposition; and they take the same care, with regard to arguments *against* it; and they look well to the person or persons, who shall compare and balance the arguments adduced, and give a final *determination*:—a competent time having been employed in *preparation*, the arguments *for* are produced and enforced: these being examined, and any weaknesses in them or *fallacies* exposed, the arguments *against* appear in like manner: a reply is made, on one side and  
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the other, till there appears to be a waste of time and attention in proceeding farther; and then the *determination* begins: sometimes, perhaps, it may begin according to some *rule* formed on a number of instances, which becomes customary:—this *determination* is dispassionate and candid, neat, orderly, precise: free from bias to one side or the other; assuming an air of dignity and superiority, which may have the effect of silencing the Advocates, in case they shall have contracted any prejudices by the earnestness of pleading: and marking such a benevolent anxiety for truth (and justice, which may be considered as a species of truth), such an elevated respect for what is right and generally beneficial, as may render mere victory and superiority in dispute contemptible. Such a *determination* would seldom fail, if ever, of promoting improvement; and it would, in some sense, always give satisfaction: because it would leave every one satisfied, that every thing had been done which could be done, with the faculties and opportunities afforded, at the time, by Divine Providence.

It must be owned, that such disputations and conferences as have been hitherto instituted, for the purpose of deciding doubts and dissensions respecting religion, have not been attended with success; we might instance in the Disputations at Oxford, in the reign of Queen Mary, and the Hampton-Court Conference, in the reign of James the First; but it would not be very difficult to assign reasons for the failure of such discussions.—*Sterne* may have had an idea not unlike ours, when he said, “ I reverence truth as much as any body; but, when it has slipped us, if a man will but take me by the hand, and go quietly and search for it, as for a thing we have both lost, and can neither of us do well without,—I’ll go to the world’s end with him:—But I hate disputes.”

C H A P.

## C H A P. II.

## OF THE QUALITIES OF A CONTROVERSIALIST.

1. **I**N each controversy we suppose *three* characters, though it is possible, that one man may assume more characters than his own; *two Advocates*, and *a Judge*. In order to make controversy as useful as it may be made, we must consider those *qualities*, which each of these persons ought to *have*, or to acquire; and those, which each ought to *avoid*.—If it be asked, whether we suppose controversy here to be *voluntary* or *involuntary*, we may answer, that all involuntary controversy ought to be carried on, as if it were voluntary, or as nearly as possible; and, therefore, that we have the idea of the voluntary sort.

Our *two* advocates ought to have the *same* qualities; and therefore we may say, that we will first treat of the qualities of the Advocate, and then of those of the Judge. Qualities may be good or bad; we will first treat of the *good qualities* of an Advocate, or of the qualities of a good Advocate; and then, of his bad qualities, or *faults*; that is, of the faults, which he ought particularly to study to *avoid*, as being those to which he is most *liable*.

An Advocate may have some good qualities respecting *himself* (as it may be called), and some relating to his *Adversary*. And he may have *faults* respecting both.—Those, which respect *himself*, may be conceived as subsisting in his character, *before* he becomes an advocate; or such as appear in his *preparing* himself for controversy; or such as appear in the actual controverting: or such as appear in



his hearing *objections*, to what he has advanced, and in his *answering*.

First, then, as to the *good* qualities of an Advocate respecting *himself*, in his character, before he becomes an Advocate. He ought to be one, who has been brought up to feel a strong love of truth, though he does not judge finally what is truth, so as to prevent his using any argument, in which he sees a fallacy distinctly, though he may use arguments, which he faintly and imperfectly sees what he thinks a possibility of answering.—He ought to have had a regular improvement in knowledge, to be in habits of industry, patience, perseverance; to have powers of inventing and distinguishing; natural animation, or warmth, tempered with prudence; powers of pleasing; and, if he has some ambition, and love of honour, we will not reckon them amongst the bad qualities, but the good, so long as they are not perverted or abused.

In *preparing* for controversy, he should have keen penetration; should acquire comprehensive views of various subjects, communicating with each other; he should have power of bringing shapeless hints and surmises, into form; neatness of conception and arrangement, so that the series of his topics should have force from the manner of their succession; he should have strength of mind to bear *suspense* of judgment, *το επεχειν*: because a temporary suspense of judgment is frequently necessary, in order to acquire an opinion, which need not afterwards be given up.

In the actual *pleading*; he should have *copia verborum*, used so as non obstreperare sibi ipsi; perspicuity, so as non offundere nebulas;—he should have ornament to attract, *σπαρδη* to rouse, *ηθος* to interest and affect: yet all this, without departing from  
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from *simplicity*, without giving up the *form* of *reasoning* and precise argument.

During the time that he was to be the *hearer*; he should give unremitting *attention*; he should be acute in discerning fallacy, ready in turning a thought into a new shape, and bringing it round to his own side:—yet not afraid to appear stupid, when he is dissatisfied with what is urged as allowable:—open to conviction, and frank and brave in acknowledging it.

So much for the good qualities of the Advocate respecting *himself*; now we come to those respecting his *Adversary*.

2. I should reckon amongst the good qualities of an Advocate which relate to his Adversary, a generous emulation; this should be softened and ennobled by a benevolent and respectful carriage and manner, as to one engaged with himself in the pursuit of truth and rectitude. Yet, at the same time that an Advocate's manner was kind and respectful to his Adversary, it should be undaunted, open and frank. He should, however, be patient, not easily provoked: and if, at any time, his opinion was necessarily such as seemed harsh and hostile, still he should keep strictly to those Laws of War, which the nature of the contention required.

3. The *faults* of the Advocate arise in the same circumstances with his good qualities.

His character may be such, that he may habitually love victory more than truth; instead of having acquired knowledge, he may be one, who thinks to succeed by a display of words; it may be his turn to affect strokes of genius, and look upon application as illiberal drudgery;—or, on the other hand, his character may be such, that he may be pedantic, rely wholly on dry, cold argumentation,



without thinking of making his arguments assume a pleasing form.

In preparing for controversy, he may give way to any faulty bias in his character: he may content himself with superficial or narrow views; the topics, that he hits upon, he may leave unfinished, or ill arranged.—And he may be so impatient, as to adopt any crude notion, rather than bear a state of suspense till he has maturely considered the grounds and reasons, upon which he should proceed.

In pleading, he may want words; or, if he has them, may throw them into confused heaps:—he may want perspicuity, ornament, force, sentiment; or, having these, he may shew too clearly, that they are the principal objects of his attention.

While he is hearing or receiving the Arguments of his Antagonist, he may be sometimes inattentive, or too easily confounded by a specious argument:—or, dreading the appearance of stupidity, he may pretend to understand an argument, when it is really unmeaning; he may catch at any seeming advantage, which, when he has got it, turns out to bring him more harm than good: It will be also a great fault, if he is disingenuous, and shews, that he wishes not to be convinced of any error; or if, when convinced, he be too cowardly to own it.

4. The faults of an Advocate respecting his opponent, may be, in like manner, conceived from his good qualities already mentioned. Instead of emulation, he may shew envy: he may be unkind, or disrespectful;—or, on the contrary, he may affect a too fawning and effeminate politeness.—When an opposition of opinions seems unavoidable, he may be too petulant or impatient; and, in his attacks, which he deems necessary, he may make use of unfair methods, answering to poisoned weapons in war.

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Though these faults must be the opposites to the good qualities, yet I look upon the mention of them as far from useless: the descriptions of the good and the bad qualities throwing light upon each other.—Our enumeration of qualities does not pretend to be complete, but is only such as to open the subject before us, and put the attentive into a train of thinking.

5. The qualities of the *Judge*, good and bad, may be more briefly described; his character being more even and uniform, than that of the Advocate. He should be more knowing than the Advocates; so, at least, as to have no new elements to learn.—He should be superior to them, (or be made so) by age, rank, or other things. He should have a greatness of mind, which would make him disdain all partiality \* and narrow views. He should be capable of making the nicest distinctions, as very few ingenious arguments can be solved without them.—As he has to judge from the whole of what he hears, a strong and nice retention must be requisite, and a power of throwing out superfluous matter, and setting the forcible parts in direct opposition to each other. Nor is it any trifling talent to make that, which has been urged in pompous and inflated language, easy and familiar, clear and popular.

It may be doubted how far ornament and refined wit, attic salt, should be reckoned a quality of a Judge:—if all people loved truth heartily, and were capable of understanding and relishing nice distinctions, it would not be necessary: but a love of truth does not sufficiently animate the generality; and nice distinctions often give disgust, by wearing  
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\* The Professors at Helmstadt used to take an oath to be of no party. Calixtus was a great Moderator. Mosheim, Vol. ii. Quarto, p. 488.



an appearance of sophistry and evasion: therefore, it were rather upon the whole desirable, that the Judge should have something lively and entertaining in his manner. His wit, or fancy, should be of a lofty, polished, refined nature, never condescending to meanness or vulgar buffoonery. It should be a wit seeming to disdain wit.

The *faults*, into which a Judge is most likely to run, not to speak of any so plain as ignorance, confusion, inattention, insensibility to truth, are, interfering with the Advocates, or becoming in some degree an Advocate himself; connecting opinions with his own person, or making them, in some sort, his own; using a multitude of words, in order to shew himself fluent, without a view to new arrangement, shortening, familiarizing.—According to what has been said, we may add, that it is a fault of a Judge of controversy to be dull.

6. It follows easily, from a review of the qualities of Advocate and Judge, now enumerated, that the best Advocate would be the worst Judge, and the best Judge the worst Advocate. But we will not again compare their qualities;—the point will be sufficiently clear from suggesting, that, in general, Parents would be the best possible Advocates for their Children, and the least able to judge in any causes relating to them.

7. So far the qualities of controversialists have been taken from the nature of the thing; from suppositions of theory; and the observations made upon them have been such, as might suit any time or place: we shall now find it worth our while to speak of them, more with a view to *fact*; but, as the chief purpose of doing so must be, to see what regulations ought to be made in controversy, we need not dwell on any good qualities, which are at present observable in controversialists, but may confine

fine ourselves to those *faults*, which seem to require a reformation.

8. All the faults, which are observable in our own times, in the conducting of controversy, seem as if they might originate from our wrong principles in undertaking it; from our making it an *hostile* contention amongst different sects for superiority, instead of an amicable contention amongst brethren for the clearing up of truth.—Or, if some of these faults seem as if they might subsist, even in amicable controversy, yet they would in that subsist in a less degree, and would be much more easily rectified. More particularly; the faults, which principally strike us at present, may be divided into such as the controversialist has belonging to himself, or such as he has towards his Adversary.—Of the former sort, are, i. Various ways of *missing the question*. ii. Various modes of *presumption*, or want of diffidence; or, what comes to the same thing, of carelessness about falling into error.—The faults of the latter sort may be considered as different species of *Hostilities*, where no hostility ought to take place.

9. i. We find amongst disputants various ways of *missing the question*. In order that a controversy should subsist, there must be supposed some proposition laid down, which one side takes in the *affirmative* sense, the other in the *negative*: I apprehend, all questions might be put into this *form*.—Now, if we have *no ideas* to such proposition, we cannot affirm or deny any thing about it; and therefore the *whole* dispute, in such case, may be looked upon as missing the question: disputes of this nature are merely *verbal*: that is, controversies about *unintelligible* doctrines are controversies about nothing.—Notwithstanding this, there may be some intelligible disputes *relating* to unintelligible doctrines;



doctrines; as, concerning expressions of Scripture, on which such doctrines are founded;—but the fault of which we are speaking, has place at any time, when men speak without ideas, as if they had distinct conceptions.—Sometimes, the use of learned *terms* is apt to make men deceive themselves, and take for granted, that they have ideas, because they use high-sounding words.

Sometimes, disputants miss the question, by supposing a question to be more extensive than it is; or by getting beyond the *limits* of that, which is properly in agitation :—as when, in disputing about the use of ceremonies or habits in religious worship, they urge arguments, as if the question was about the use of religious worship.—To this there may be an opposite fault, which must consist in arguing, as if the subject were *less* extensive than it really is; as if, for instance, the question was only about the rights of a single individual, when it really affects every individual; or the whole Church of Christ.

Another way of missing the question is, urging that such an opinion is held by some person generally disapproved, instead of proving that the opinion is false.—‘ This is the doctrine of Spinoza, Toland, Tindal, Hobbes, Hume;’ so say disputants, insinuating thereby, that it is to be reprobated: as if there was any of these writers, who had not written many truths.—The question is not, whether Mr. Hume wrote such an opinion, but whether it is true.

10. ii. We find amongst controversialists various modes of presumptuous confidence, or taking opinions for granted, or want of carefulness about running into falsehood and error.

They will sometimes presume so much upon the truth of their own tenets, that they will defend them by arguments, which they themselves think  
inconclusive.

inconclusive. The danger of this is well described by Dr. *Powell* \*. Something of this sort, we formerly said †, was once allowed amongst Christians, and called disputing κατ' οἰκονομίαν ‡.

It is frequently seen, that men use arrogant language, and declamatory expressions, setting aside all doubt, that the truth is on their side. But why may not their adversaries do the same? and, if they do, one arrogant and declamatory expression is as good as another; and they all together are so many hindrances to the settlement of the truth. It is sometimes found, that people even commend declamatory expressions on their own side, as if what they hold for truth must be acknowledged truth. But this is not of the nature of regular contention, even amongst enemies. Though every one reckons himself in the right, and his enemy in the wrong, when he declares war, yet, in carrying on war, one party is to be esteemed as much in the right as another: no one party must use any mode of attack, which he will not allow to be used against himself. The rules for carrying on contention do not at all intermeddle with the question, who was right in beginning contention. Bigotry is being so blindly attached to one religious persuasion, as to think, that it is to be enforced by all methods whatsoever: by methods, which would be thought very oppressive, if made use of to enforce some different persuasions.

Want of diffidence makes disputants forget, that we may have a probability to *act* upon, and yet be very far from certainty; whatever is only probable may be false§, and yet superior probability, however trifling the superiority, is sufficient to determine our action. Though men, therefore, may have

\* P. 305. † Book I. Chap. xii. Sect. 15.

‡ Mosheim, Cent. iii. 2. 3. 10. § Book I. xv. 15.



have evidence enough to act upon, they may not have enough to entitle them to insult others, or triumph over them, as being certainly in error. Indeed, those, who are clearly convinced, seldom insult: satisfied with themselves, they are kind and candid to others.

11. The second sort of faults observable in controversies is that, by which a man does something wrong towards his adversary. The faults of this class have here been said\* to be all different species of *Hostilities*; all hostilities are faults, where no hostility is necessary.

We have already mentioned the folly of using expressions on one side, which may be used with equal right on the other, as not forwarding, but rather hindering the settlement of truth; and what was said may serve to shew the fault of using any unfair methods of attack; of doing any thing against an adversary, and blaming him for doing the same in return. Several hostilities being of this kind, this idea may accompany the mention of them.

It is a common fault of controversy, to run into *personal* reflexions; to endeavour to throw disgrace upon a cause, by disgracing those who defend it. If the person of an adversary can be made contemptible, or odious, it is reckoned a great thing; and therefore all sinister *motives* are ascribed to him. Sometimes, the reviling is made to extend to his profession, his family, his country; as if defects in these, or in himself, could make his arguments defective.—Sometimes, in religious controversy, the solemn duty of Prayer has been made the vehicle of detraction.—In other things, the same persons would not run into the same absurdities; they would listen to arguments, abstracted from all personal

\* Sect. 8.

sonal considerations, if even a murderer was to urge any in his own defence.

It is also a common fault, to charge upon an adversary *consequences* drawn from his doctrines, as if he professed those consequences, as much as the doctrines from which they were drawn. Yet it may be easily understood, that, if I do not acknowledge a deduced doctrine or maxim to be true, whatever evil there may be in it, I am free from that evil at present. Perhaps, sometimes, the deduced doctrine may be of a dangerous sort; so that a person might wish to hold it secretly; still, till I shew some marks of holding it, I cannot be justly charged as its favourer.

It is a common fault in controversy, to throw odium upon an argument, by referring it to an odious *party*. ‘This is rank Popery;’ or, ‘it is reviving the scepticism of *Pyrrho*, the fatality of the *Stoics*,’ &c.—as if no man thought for himself, independently of Party.

This approaches near to what was before mentioned, as a mode of missing the question in debate; and it may be observed, of the other faults towards the adversary, that there is inaccuracy in them, as well as malevolence.

By the combination of these faults, we find controversy, especially in Books, very different from what it ought to be: a kind of illiberal scolding and fighting, a mutual buffeting of reputations: sometimes, a mere effusion of personal enmity; sometimes, a wretched disingenuous trial of skill, a literary prize-fighting, exhibited to certain spectators, who afford it their attention: the prize, perhaps, a few followers, or a little applause; or, possibly, the patronage of some powerful Bigots, who have rewards to bestow.

12. According



12. According to our idea of controversy, there should be *three* parties concerned, two Advocates and a Judge: but, in written controversy, we seldom see more than *two* parties; these are to be called Advocates; but each of these takes upon him something of the character of the Judge; and, of course, their duties will vary from those of the perfect Advocate. Each must be less the Advocate than a perfect Advocate, and less the Judge than a perfect Judge: each should endeavour to assume the qualities of an Advocate, when he is doing the business of an Advocate, and the qualities of a Judge, when he is performing the part of a Judge.—An attempt to do this would lessen prejudice, partiality, passion; and would generate an increase of candour, benevolence, and reason: would make the parties more desirous of coming to an agreement; and, for that purpose, more earnest to discover the real truth\*.

13. It may be proper to distinguish here between some of the ways of reasoning, which have been reprobated in this Chapter, and some, which bear some resemblance to them, and are allowed by Logicians.

We have here proscribed all personal reflexions in controversy; is that proscribing all use of the *argumentum ad hominem*? no, that is a way of arguing, which may be very useful for certain ends, and in its proper place†. To argue in this way is, according to Mr. Locke, “to press a man with consequences drawn from his own principles or concessions;”—and, though Mr. Locke speaks of its inferiority to the *argumentum ad judicium*, he  
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\* *Truth*, or *Justice*; either word might do; all virtues have been considered as species of *Truth*; and also as reducible to *Justice*.

† See before, i. 17. 19.

owns it may “*dispose*” a man “for the reception of truth,” which seems a very important matter; those, who are disposed for the reception of truth, seldom fail to embrace it.—When our Saviour had only to overcome the prejudices of the Jews, it was surely right reasoning to convince them, that, in rejecting him as their Messiah, they acted an *inconsistent* part: and it is now right to shew the same (as Bishop Butler does) to those, who object to Christianity what they allow in Natural Religion. “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee\*,” is a very fair method in practice, though not so well adapted to speculation: but it may often remove all difficulties, which actually lie in the way at any particular time. But personal reflections are not conclusive in any circumstances whatever; they are so many meteors, which only dazzle and mislead.—An argumentum ad hominem may sometimes imply a personal reflection accidentally; as, when it is urged, ‘you, who are a Papist, superstitious, and intolerant, have no right to speak in such a manner.’

Sometimes, perhaps, men may be induced to use the method of charging consequences, by its likeness to what is called in Logic *reductio ad absurdum*: but that is as strict a demonstration as any whatever; if you lay down a proposition, and from it deduce consequences, till you come to any proposition, which is undeniably false, then it follows, that the proposition, with which you set out, was false, and its contradictory true.—But the consequences charged in the kind of controversy, which we are speaking of, are no consequences in the nature of things; they are only practical consequences, presumed to follow—such as need not follow, and, in fact, generally do not.

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\* Luke xix. 22.



It might be considered, how far the arguments of superior to inferior beings are necessarily of the nature of the argumentum ad hominem. God cannot reason with us fully, "his thoughts are not as our thoughts:" and the same may be applied, in a less degree, when wise men reason with the ignorant: yet, reasoning with men according to their conceptions, answering fools according to their folly, is not exactly the same thing as reasoning with them from their *concessions*; or requiring them to act on the same principles in all cases: yet, it will often happen, that, when you are obliged to condescend to men's conceptions, you can only argue with them on their own principles: as far as higher principles are necessary, they must be left unconvinced.

14. The last thing to be taken notice of, in this Chapter, is the *scriptural* idea of controversy.

Misapplication of Scripture has done much harm in controversy; and there is some excuse for it.—In the Old Testament, we find nations exterminated as being idolaters; idolatrous Priests cut off; curses denounced: In the New, we meet with instances of such imperfect controversial reasoning as the argumentum ad hominem; and several seemingly harsh \* expressions.

To give particular answers here to all the arguments, which might be drawn from this source, would carry us too far: something has been said, in speaking of the Christian † Fathers; something will

\* Matt. xxiii. 27. whited sepulchres. Luke xiii. 32. go tell that Fox. Acts xxiii. 3. whited wall. (but compare xxiii. 5.) Gal. v. 12. cut off that trouble you. Phil. iii. 2. Dogs, concision. Tit. iii. 10. an Heretic &c. reject. 2 Pet. ii. 1. damnable Heresies. Jude 8. and 10. filthy dreamers—as Brute Beasts. *Labbé* makes these texts &c. his apology for using harsh expressions in controversy about Pope Joan. Script. Eccles. Vol. 1. p. 1004.

† 1. 12. 14.

will occur on the 18th and 33d Articles of the Church of England.—At present, we must content ourselves with general answers.—Of the argumentum ad hominem I need say nothing more:—Many of the difficulties, taken out of the *Old Testament*, are only parts of Divine Government, in separating the Jews from their idolatrous neighbours. In which we are to consider, that the established morality of the times must be supposed to be permitted: God had probably no more plan of revealing moral than natural Philosophy. Many of those in the *New Testament* are instances of accommodation, allusion, and the kind of quotation explained, B. I. Chap. xvii. Sect. 13.—Some may be solved by custom, and Homer's \* οἰνοβαρες, κυνος οἰματ' εχων, might assist in the solution, as well as expressions in ancient English writers.—Some harshnesses are descriptions of Sects; some imply rules of ecclesiastical discipline. Some would go off on examination; as Jude, ver. 10.

The removal of these difficulties will be illustrated by the texts, where no such circumstances arose; these being *plain* texts, for the most part, shew the true scriptural meaning.

2 Cor. ii. 6. 7. “Ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him.” Here, the occasion should be clearly seen: the Fornicator † had been censured by the majority; St. Paul is very delicate in avoiding personalities.

Gal. vi. 1. restore, “in the spirit of meekness.”

Ephes. iv. 15. “Speaking the truth in Love.”

1 Tim. iii. 2. A Bishop must be διδασκλικος, have all the temper, &c. of a good teacher.

2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. is strong and full; for the occasion, see Michaelis's Introductory Lectures, p. 363, quarto.

Tit.

\* Il. Lib. i. v. 225.

† See Locke on the place.



Tit. iii. 2. shews, what an Ecclesiastic should teach men to be.

Jude, ver. 9. even that is against " railing accusation."

One might argue, moreover, from the New Testament putting men upon a footing of Brethren: and, lastly, one might urge, that the exhortations to forbearance being plain, the more difficult parts of Scripture are not rightly interpreted, if they are not made consistent with them, allowance being made for different occasions.



## C H A P. III.

OF INTRODUCING RIDICULE INTO CONTROVERSY: AND FIRST, OF RIDICULE IN GENERAL.

1. **H**AVING seen the nature of controversy, and the qualifications of controversialists, I might now proceed to deduce rules, and give instances of the need there is of them; but a subject of magnitude, the subject of *ridicule*, stands in my way: to pass it by, would be to omit what has sometimes been made a considerable ingredient in controversy; to treat it fully, would require a separate work; especially as I know not any *Author*\*, who has written upon it in a manner perfectly satisfactory. I must say something of it, and be as concise as possible.

Ridicule may be used, either as a *friend* or *enemy* to true Religion. There are some extravagances in the practice of piety, for which it has been thought the only remedy†.—That it can be an enemy‡, need scarce be mentioned: as a friend, we should secure it, and cultivate it; and also learn how to employ it to advantage;—as an enemy, we should learn how to guard against it.

2. The

\* Hartley, in his *Essay on Man*, has done much on this subject. Bp. Warburton has treated it, with a view to religion, in his *Dedication to the Free-thinkers*, and in his *Preface to his Book on the Holy Spirit*.

† See *Provincial Letters*, by Pascal: *Moliere's Tartuffe*: *Swift's Tale of a Tub*: *Foote's Minor*; &c.—and we might look back to *Lucian*.

‡ See *Leland's View*, &c. Vol. 1. p. 62, 63. 4th Edit.



2. The ridiculous takes in whatever excites laughter, or the inward feelings usually accompanied with laughter: now this is found to be, most frequently, some trifling absurdity, inconsistency, turpitude, or something of like nature.—The word ridicule, like other words, is not used with great precision and steadiness; sometimes expressing what is seen in the objects, sometimes what is felt in the mind; but we may leave the senses of it to custom.—It is a subject not yet understood; inasmuch, that the arguments for and against it seldom seem directly opposed to each other: the way to improve it must be, to make a great number of experiments with care, and class them with nicety:—with as much as we should use in experiments relating to magnetism, fixed air, or electricity\*. Our error is thinking the subject trifling; if we studied and improved it regularly, we should probably find it important; both to Truth and Virtue.

3. Let us begin with experiments on *Infants*: some of these we may find mentioned in Dr. *Hartley's* Essay on Man; and we may improve upon them, by new trials and observations of our own. Not that infants have ideas of absurdity, turpitude, &c. but their feelings are undisguised, and not complicated. They do not laugh aloud for some months†. They are made to laugh, by the gentle touching of certain nerves (or of the skin, which immediately covers them) in the more sensible parts of the body: the sensation seems between pleasure and pain, or to be pleasure nearly bordering upon pain.

Infants are made to laugh sometimes without contact, by a certain degree of *surprize*; which seems again to give a certain degree of motion and vibration

\* Cic. de Or. L. 2. might furnish experiments. Sect. 54—71.

† Hartley, Vol. 1. p. 437.

vibration to the *nerves*, such as will be in some small degree painful: increase the degree of surprize, or the shock, you make the Infant *cry*; which it will do with the same shock, if the irritability of the nerves is increased by sickness or weakness. In this experiment, we observe, that the shock or surprize does not produce the laughter instantaneously; but that the laughter ensues a moment after; upon the removal of the shock; or of the fear, which the attack occasions.

These experiments are in a rude state at present.

4. So long as our experiments are confined to the *Body*, we can speak a tolerably plain language; but, in order to deduce any thing from bodily phenomena, with regard to *men's* laughing at *absurdity*, &c. we must suppose, that the Nerves may be made to vibrate in the same manner by the stroke or shock which *absurdity*, &c. make on the Brain, the source of the Nerves, as by bodily contact, or by surprize. This supposition seems so probable, that we may admit it, till something arises in our experiments to contradict or disparage it. Besides, as Ridicule belongs to the mind, we are obliged to speak by comparison, or metaphor. Our terms must be borrowed from sensible objects, and transferred, according to some confused notions of resemblance between acts of Mind and acts of Body. Thus, the mind is said to reflect, or bend back, to weigh, to be elated or dejected; to have precepts inculcated or trod in upon it; and so on. —We, in like manner, speak of *trains* of thought, and of the *tide* of affections, and *flow* of sentiment.

With the help of such terms as these, we may express a sort of an Hypothesis concerning Ridicule. Let it not be taken as any thing distinctly conceived, and it may be of some use. A sense of ridicule, or laughter, arises, when two *currents*



of feelings meet suddenly in the mind, striking the *moral sense*, and by their concurrence make an effect on the mind (and therefore on the *nerves*) resembling the confusion and *ebullition* caused by the meeting of two real currents; and still more of two currents of fluids, which *effervesce*, and repel each other.—Out of this Hypothesis we must never leave the moral sense: there must be some shock or surprise upon that; and such shock must be of a limited strength.—If an opposition of two trains of thought is, in any case, much expected, then a sudden, unexpected *coincidence*, may give the moral shock, and excite laughter.

The man of the world, and the man of strict science, may here cry out jointly, what mere *hypothesis*! it pretends to be nothing more: but the language of Hypothesis is often *convenient*; and, when the real nature of it is understood, it does not lead into error. I had rather have men talk to me of *Attraction* than not, so long as they are aware of its being only the *name* of the unknown *cause* of known effects: and the same of phlogiston, and electric matter:—nay, I am no enemy to *animal spirits*, so long as they are not spoken of, as if they were understood.—Framing an Hypothesis is saying, such things happen, AS IF they had such a cause; which is the best way of arranging them for the mind to see them clearly, and proceed upon them easily and freely. Caution, indeed, is always needful, lest the AS IF should get changed into an affirmation of *Fact*. Experiments in Optics proceed, as if small particles of light came from the heavenly luminaries in right lines, with very great velocity; do we know more of the fact?—As to our Hypothesis about Ridicule, it certainly wants much clearing up: I should be willing to abandon it; and, indeed, no one could be tenacious of an  
Hypothesis,

Hypothesis, who knew what an Hypothesis was. Find another supposed cause of the phænomena of Laughter, which shall combine more facts or experiments, and you are perfectly at liberty to adopt it.

But, at present, let us see more of our *two currents*. If I *respect* a man, I feel something answering to such an expression as this: 'my sentiments of respect *flow*, on account of such a man:' on the sight or mention of this man, my sentiments are put in *motion*: and the same is true of *contempt*. Now, it might happen, that, on some accounts, I might feel respect for a man, and, on others, contempt; at least, in particular circumstances; his general character might be respectable, his dress might have something mean in it, or contemptible; if these two sentiments were suddenly set in motion, at the same time, and gave a shock, not very strong, to that faculty of mine, which judges of rectitude, propriety, consistency, &c. I should be made to *laugh*\*.

5. It will generally happen, that what excites laughter, will be something absurd or improper, in a degree; but our emotion, being sudden, will depend upon those notions of propriety, which are most familiar to us, and *habitual*. Now, we may,  
by

\* See Mr. Cole's Latin Dissertation, which got an Academical Prize in 1780—p. 8. and 16.

*H. Fielding* makes his *Philosopher Square* ridiculous, by putting on him the woman's night-cap; and exposing him in a situation strongly contrasted with Philosophy.

We feel both respect and contempt, in reading Swift's Tale of a Tub; but they are not strong sentiments there; neither is their effervescence strong.

By the way, as Peter, Martin and Jack represent three leading sects, so I conceive Fielding to mean, that *Thwackum* shall represent Religion, when careless about Virtue; and *Square*, Virtue when too negligent of Religion.



by custom and fashion, think many things indecorous, which will not appear so, when we have time to reflect. And the same is true of other notions and sentiments, even respect itself; we may feel respect, at first sight, which goes off, on farther acquaintance. Hence, we should always be *aware*, that a thing may make us *laugh*, and yet not be absurd, nor appear so, when we come to consider it\*. An apparent absurdity will excite laughter for a moment, but, if it does not appear to our reason to be real, the ridiculous effect will go off. We ought not, therefore, to trust to our feeling of the ridiculous, where any thing material is at stake, but give it a thorough examination. This is important.

6. By way of confirming what has been said, we may apply it to account for a few appearances†. We may conceive the state of mind of that man, who naturally does not laugh much; and also of him who laughs very readily. The former has extensive knowledge of things, and their consequences, their

\* Hartley, Vol. i. p. 441.

† Suppose a young Courtier of Queen Anne's Court to come in amongst us, ready dressed, in his enormous peruke, large cuffs, &c. for court, and to act the gay, easy, chatty courtier, though unaffectedly.—Or, an eager and absent Philosopher in his night-dress, to publish his *εὐγενεα*. Or John Moody, in the simplicity of his nature.—The instance of the Ministers of Charles the 2d. mimicking Lord Chancellor Clarendon, might be suitable here: mentioned in Rapin, Vol. ii. p. 646.—mentioned also in Warburton's Dedication to Freethinkers, p. xvii. 4to.: and the passage from Lord Shaftesbury, p. xii. 4to. receives an answer from this paragraph. In *mimicry*, the sentiment excited by the original effervesces with that excited by the copy.

I have known the German name for the Deity, *Gott*, strike an Englishman as ridiculous: would our name strike a German as equally so?

The King of Pegu, when he heard from one Balbi, that there was no King at Venice, burst into a fit of laughter so great, that a coughing seized him, &c. See Spirit of Laws, 19. 2.

their uncertainties, dangers, perplexities, &c.: he discerns their real nature; and, besides that ridicule loses its effect and requires to be heightened like other poignances, he gets a general distrust of ludicrous representations: the latter is, for want of reason and reflexion, struck with trifling incongruities, such as are cleared away, as it were, and solved by the reason and good sense of the other; this latter approaches to that boyish unthinkingness, which occasions such bursts of laughter at theatrical entertainments, when any thing of an absurdity or incongruity is introduced\*. So just is the observation made in Ecclesiasticus xix. 30. A man's excessive laughter (with other things) shews "what he is†." Also Chap. xxi. 20. "A fool lifteth up his voice† with laughter, but a wise man doth scarce smile a little."—Nevertheless, serious persons, when they do laugh, laugh intensely; the reason seems to be, their very strong sense of decency and propriety, and their very high respect for decorum, mixed with some degree of good-humour, which hinders them from flying out into anger and indignation.

7. It may be objected, that ridicule gives us *pleasure*, and absurdity *pain*, and, therefore, that  
absurdity

\* This is remarkable in a Pantomime Farce, during the Christmas Holidays.

† Hartley, Vol. i. p. 439.

‡ Vulgar people laugh at bodily *deformity*; "my Lord," is a common nick-name for the hump-backed:—also at *Deafness*; a deaf man once said to me, "a mort of folk laugh at me." Most men are inclined to laugh at wrong answers from deaf men, if there is an affectation of seeming to hear; or, if the answer given makes a clashing, a contrast or coincidence, with that, which ought to have been given.—*Contrasts* are frequently made in the mind, by means of *one* visible or audible object; but then that object is opposed to some *abstract* idea already formed in the mind by *habit*.—*Deformity* is contrasted with the abstract idea, in the mind, of an human shape; or, perhaps, of a beautiful and perfect form.



absurdity cannot occasion ridicule. But the pleasure of ridicule is of the *pungent* kind, like that of taking snuff, mustard, &c. which give a shock, bordering upon pain, to the olfactory nerves, and those of the palate. Increase this shock, and such pain ensues as we try to avoid. In every small pain, there seems to be something of pleasure; every lesser evil seems to be undergone voluntarily, as a species of good\*.

It may be also objected, that the effect of ridicule is immediate, whereas, according to † one of our experiments, it ought not to be till after a small *interval*. It seems possible, that the pleasure of ridicule may be of that species, which Mr. Burke calls *delight*; it may arise from the *removal* of pain; of that pain, which is occasioned by the first shock upon the nerves: I have seen some few persons laugh heartily, after a moment's pause; but that may be a mere unaccountable custom; the best account of the matter seems to be, that, by a great number of instances, we get to feel and expect, that the shock will immediately go off; and then, the effect of ridicule upon our minds and bodies becomes *instantaneous*. The case may not be the same in children; they may feel fear; that fear may soon go off, and be followed by security, or a sense of safety, which, opposed to the fear, may occasion the laughter: yet the impression of the fear may remain for a short time: they have not yet *learned* to laugh. We *see* instantaneously and judge of distances and shapes; but it is because we have *learned to see*.

8. From what has been last said, and from what is remarked of the laughter of Infants being turned  
into

\* Instances to the purpose appear in Mr. Burke's Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful.

† Sect. 3.

into crying by a little increase of the shock, we may conceive how *smaller* absurdities\*, faults, &c. may excite laughter, though greater faults excite abhorrence and *detestation*; even where there is some kind of contrast or coincidence: and how a man of nice moral feelings may abhor, what one less delicate, or more hardened, may only laugh at:—or how even the same man may be differently affected in different states of his nerves.

9. And, though we have yet ascribed *Gravity* to only *one* cause, comprehensive views of the nature of actions, yet we may now perceive other causes. i. A man will be habitually grave, if he has not from nature much moral sensibility, or very irritable nerves. ii. If he has moral sensibility particularly quick and strong; in which case he will detest what others only laugh at. iii. If the moral sensibility, which he has in his constitution, has not been exercised, but has been overpowered by other feelings; by affliction, earnest pursuits, of riches, honours, &c. or by any passions or appetites. iv. If his moral feelings have been hardened and seared by much wickedness: the wicked man will laugh, indeed, sometimes at what others detest, but, when others laugh, he will be insensible. v. Gravity will sometimes arise from a persuasion, that ridicule is sinful.

10. Sometimes an absurdity, of the ridiculous sort, raises, in men of refined minds, only a sort of *internal laughter*; or a sentiment corresponding to laughter:—this sentiment has not a *name*. Dr. Brown†, I think, calls it *contempt*:—and it may be so like contempt, as to make it natural for that name to be borrowed and used, when there is occasion to express it: but contempt is often an elated, lofty,

\* Smaller faults are called in French by the name of *Ridicules*.

† In his *Essays on the Characteristics of Lord Shaftesbury*.



lofty; and a serious sentiment. The sentiment (or the contempt if you please) of ridicule, is not inconsistent with kindness to the object of it, nor even with respect to his character upon the whole. Contempt seems also simple, or unmixed, ridicule to be always compound; contempt takes profound views of things, the views of ridicule are always superficial: if an object be purely contemptible, you do not laugh at it. When contempt helps to excite laughter, it is by effervescing with respect; a man, who despises public worship, does not laugh at church; a man, who respects it in a certain degree, is apt to do so; a still stronger respect would prevent his laughing.

11. If it were to be asked, then, what it is to *ridicule* a subject, we might give some such answer as the following; it is to give two different views of it, at the same time, which shall excite opposite feelings; one view shall excite some sort of respect, or approbation, the other some sort of disrespect or disapprobation, which shall be rather predominant. The mind shall attend to both views, and experience the joint effect of both feelings, which shall be a shock upon the moral sense, or sense of propriety, decency, &c.—but not strong beyond a certain degree.—To give the two different views here required, there will be various ways of combining ideas belonging to the subject, in such a manner as to form *images*\* suitable to the purpose; contrasts, coincidences, &c. which cannot be specified beforehand. Nay, even when these images, &c. have been formed, and have had their effect in exciting laughter, it will be often very difficult to mark out, in a very minute and satisfactory manner, how that effect has been produced.

12. *Man*

\* Cole, p. 16.

12. *Man is the only risible animal*; why? because he only has a conscience, or moral faculty; he only seems to have a sense of propriety, and to be shocked by absurdity or turpitude, as such. If this be a right representation, ridicule ought not to be held in very *low esteem*: this seems sufficient to rank it above all those parts of our constitution, which we have in common with the Brute Creation. The Monkey, to be sure, grins, but he is perfectly grave, even when he does ridiculous tricks; this makes us, when once persuaded of the gravity, the more inclined to laugh at them: a ridiculous action, with a perfectly grave countenance\*, makes a striking contrast.

13. But the principal question, which has arisen concerning ridicule, is, how far it is the *test† of truth*? It does not seem to be either more or less a test of truth, than any other species of *Eloquence*. Some kinds of eloquence are best adapted to expose great and important faults, incongruities, &c; ridicule is best adapted to expose such as are more trifling. Ridicule must be examined, but must not also serious Eloquence?—Ridicule, therefore, cannot be a test, of itself merely, but still it may assist in discerning falshood: a pair of scales is an useful test of weights, though not till they themselves have been examined.

When ingenious writers assert any thing, which seems strange to me, I conclude, that they have some meaning, which I do not at first conceive;—possibly those, who say ridicule is the test of truth, mean, that people are sometimes so prejudiced, that they will not hear *reason*, and nothing can reach them

\* Jocus eò falsior, quò severior dicentis vultus. Pearce's Cic. de Or. Index Rerum, *jocus*.

† See a short specimen of Lord Shaftesbury's reasoning, in Warburton's Ded. to Freethinkers, p. 12, 8vo.



them but ridicule; which, they take for granted, is well-grounded ridicule:—when men say, that ridicule is not the test of truth, they generally conceive the ridicule to be ill grounded. Both may be right, in some measure:—on the one hand, well-grounded ridicule does make men feel follies in superstition and enthusiasm; on the other hand, ill-grounded ridicule ought not to make any man give up any religious notion or principle.—But still, comic and serious eloquence are upon the same footing; for serious eloquence may give the alarm, and afterwards be attended to or not, according to the dictates of reason: if well grounded, it will be effectual; if ill grounded, ineffectual.

Serious eloquence may not lower or debase our feelings: but does it not do much harm, if it perverts them?

14. Ridicule may be *useful* to Truth and Virtue\*. To truth it may be useful, by preventing Pedantry, and that affectation of mystery and pomp, which has so much impeded the progress of useful science: it can make high-sounding terms lose all their virtue, and set the practical knowledge of the common people on a rank equally high with the fine-spun theories of fanciful Philosophers. It is too great veneration for notions and persons, which is apt to make error too lasting; and veneration may be lessened by ridicule.

To virtue ridicule is useful, by curing smaller follies and foibles; and by hindering men from carrying the nobler passions to excess. These, when indulged too seriously, generate caprices and singularities: the worst excite abhorrence. Fortitude may

\* Bishop Warburton asserts the contrary; *Ded. to Free-thinkers*, p. 21. 8vo.—“ Its natural effect is to mislead the judgment, and to make the heart dissolute,” — But are we clear about the force of “ *Its* ? ”

may make a man a Quixot or a Colonel Bath\*:—Justice may run into misanthropy or scrupulousness; Patriotism may form a chimerical politician; piety an enthusiast; and so on:—but a man, disposed to moderate ridicule, will run into none of these follies; he will be unaffectedly and rationally, brave, just, public-spirited, devout. And, at the same time, he will keep clear of being effeminate, proud, vain, selfish, sensual, peevish, dejected, anxious, cunning, hypocritical, &c.—that is, ridicule may be made useful to virtue, by its influence both on the virtuous and vicious passions.

I have, indeed, no notion of any one's studying or acting better, than a man would do, if he kept continually trying his reasonings and his actions by ridicule.

His knowledge would be easy, unaffected, cheerful, yet accurate; free from pedantry; constantly corrected, and therefore constantly improved.

His virtue would be genuine, and simple; natural and pleasant:—he would not have a pomp and parade of serious humility, but that virtue would flourish in his mind: he would not be continually preaching on temperance, but practice its various duties, as matters of course. He would not keep boasting of his generosity, but, after shewing the most noble instances of it, he would set them all in a familiar † light, so as to claim no merit from them.

A *Friend* might, by kindly setting one's actions in a ridiculous light, act as a sort of second self.

15. We must not conclude this Chapter, without some notice of the passage quoted by ‡ Aristotle from

\* A Duellist in Fielding's *Amelia*.

† Dr. Harrison in *Amelia*. Qu. Socrates?

‡ Aristot. *Rhet.* l. 3. C. 18. ad finem. See the passage quoted in Brown's *Essays*, p. 43.



from Gorgias of Leontium, who affirms δειν την μεν σπυδα διαφθειρειν των εναντιων, γελωτι, του δε γελωτα σπυδα. ορθως λεγων, adds Aristotle; Aristotle is of opinion, that Gorgias spoke very justly, when he said, that we ought to confound the serious argument of our adversaries by ridicule; and their ridicule by serious argument.—This idea seems to agree with the representation here given; the serious argument, which may be ridiculed, is only here supposed to be argument used at the Bar. I look upon the plan of the ancient to be better than either flighting ridicule, or being afraid of it; especially as it provides against its running into extravagance.

We might inquire, whether the remark, here confined to ridicule, is not capable of being carried farther? whether, at least, one something like it might not be proposed thus: ‘we should correct our reason by our feelings, and our feelings by our reason?’ Sometimes our feelings conduct us right, when our Reason would not, as when our Reason is too serious, and too remote from common life: and sometimes our feelings would tell us things, of which our reason would leave us ignorant. Sometimes, indeed, our reason is quite necessary to correct the suggestions of our feelings. But, if we use first one, then the other, and that repeatedly, we profit most:—for each of them, besides correcting the other, improves upon it; steps forward, and makes a little advancement.

## C H A P. IV.

OF USING RIDICULE IN DISPUTES ABOUT  
RELIGION.

I. IF the question were proposed, whether Ridicule should ever be used in religious controversy, we may conceive sensible people to give different or opposite answers. Some might say, if Ridicule is a means of getting at the truth, let us not neglect to use it; let us have our religion as free from error as possible; the more pure our Faith, the more rational our practice;—and besides, if Ridicule can prevent those follies, which are apt to arise from a too serious indulgence of even the best passions, let us apply it, and make our virtue as unaffected and rational as we are able: there is no perfect religion without perfect virtue.

On the other hand, some might say, you ought to use serious argument about important things; never use ridicule to convince men: never let that, which ought to be held sacred, be made the subject of contempt and derision. And, if you laugh men out of their religious principles, you leave them unprincipled. What is the harm of profaneness, but its loosening men's good sentiments, taking from them those feelings, which would make them act rightly, and making them careless and light-minded about their religious obligations?—what is corruption, but debasing men's minds, or dispositions, and, in consequence, their principles of action?

There seems to be force in both these arguings, and, as far as they are founded in reason, they must be



be reconcileable to each other. Our business, in the present Chapter, is, to consider how they may be reconciled;—and we may lay it down in general, that, whenever two propositions, which are true, seem inconsistent, it is owing to their implying some different situations and circumstances. How far general expressions are capable of interpretation by a reference to particular circumstances, we have seen in the 10th and 11th Chapters of the first Book.

2. First, There is a great difference between a plan drawn for a *particular* state of things, and one drawn for *mankind* at large:—if you provide rules for mankind at large, you have only to study the general principles of human nature; if for any particular people at any particular time, you must estimate the effects of all their particular qualities, and habitual opinions.—The difference here is of the same kind with that between a system of *morals*, and a code of civil *Laws*.

Dr. *Powell*, in the Charge which I have recommended, seems to \* speak, without reserve, against the use of ridicule in religious controversy:—but he seems also to write with a view to *present use*, and therefore he would of course only allow so much liberty, as may be safe and salutary in the present state of things. It may be, that he would have expressed himself differently, had he been speaking with a view to mankind at large, and to that perfection, which they should endeavour gradually to attain. It is possible, that his meaning may not be contradictory to ours, as expressed in the preceding Chapter; and I hope that, hereafter, that will appear to be the case.

3. We now proceed to other considerations, tending to reconcile the opinions for and against  
using

\* P. 306.

using Ridicule in religion, by shewing when it ought to be used, and when it ought not.

The fundamental maxims, on which the contending parties build their opinions, seem to be these: *truth and virtue ought to be cultivated and improved:—men's minds ought not to be corrupted:* no one can oppose either of these maxims: if, in the imperfection of human affairs, if, amidst the dangers which attend even doing things right without reserve, both maxims cannot be practised freely, and without restraint, our view must be, to see how we can approach nearest to gaining the joint benefit of both;—how we can make a compromise between them.

Here again, for the sake of distinctness, I fear, we must, for a while, make a supposition, to which fact does not quite come up, and that is, that mankind may be divided into *Philosophers* and *People*; nay, moreover, that Philosophers can say and do things independently of the people; so as not to hurt their principles. But, if such a division is really the best means of arriving to a knowledge of what we ought to do, we should not refuse it our attention. We, therefore, proceed.

4. It is useful, that the opinions of some persons should be under establishments, as well in religion as in morals, law, physic, agriculture, &c: that is, that ordinary men, in their ordinary actions, should not have to look to first principles, but should act readily, from principles or rules already *settled*. Such principles or rules must indeed be supposed to have been duly examined by some persons, before they were so settled, and to be continually revised by the same: these persons must be such as have been able and rightly qualified to give themselves up to an attentive consideration of first principles. It seems implied in the idea of *every establishment*,



*blissment*, that some persons *take the lead* in it, and are the depositaries of the set of established maxims, from which common men are to act. And to follow these persons and these maxims is, ordinarily, the truest prudence. This is founded on the plain principle, that those, who understand a subject best, can best direct what is to be done with regard to that subject; and that any man stands the best chance of going right, by following an opinion of one much better skilled than himself:—and that no *common* men are capable of examining first principles before they act. This is so generally acknowledged, in all men's actions, when they are really in earnest, that not to act upon it, in any case, proves them not to be in earnest, but desirous of evading their duty. It is most useful, that the generality should not judge for themselves in medical matters, but take the opinion of a *Physician*. This is not denied, when men are *in earnest*: what Family would give the Father of it a medicine against the advice of a Physician?—If a family did venture, and the Father died, they would be blamed for his death, though they had the best opinion of the medicine: if he died after receiving the medicine of the Physician, they would not be blamed, however wrong the Physician judged: because it is a general rule, for the general good, that the Physician should judge in Physic.

I have said *Establishments*; there are establishments, or sets of established maxims, in every thing. In Physic, there are such a set; they admit of some latitude, and some variety; and sometimes men, who wish to distinguish themselves, will affect to depart from them, as far as they dare: but variations of this sort are not great; sometimes, however, very considerable changes will take place in the way of general *reformati*ons; as has been the case in  
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the established manner of treating the small-pox, in our own country.

In *agriculture*, there is an established set of maxims in each country, which also admit of some varieties, and some changes and reformatations.—What Farmer could invent theories or rules for himself?—In *Law*, prudent men go much upon the authority of others. And men do really go by established rules in *morality*, though they may not always be aware of it; the best of these rules are far short of perfect virtue; and the rules differ much in different ages and countries. *Conscience* also seems to follow established virtue. Particular professions have peculiar moral maxims, as Soldiers have rules of honour, merchants rules of prudence and fair dealing, &c.

There is no stronger reason for following established rules, in any of these things, than there is for following them in *Religion*; because the ordinary people are as little capable of judging for themselves in Religion as in any thing. And religion cannot be carried on effectually without uniformity, (as we shall see more clearly hereafter), nor uniformity maintained without constant submission to *authority*\*.

5. Having thus laid open the reason, why our proposed division into People and Philosophers should be made, we may proceed with greater satisfaction to get a definite idea of the difference between them. Those, who only learn and practice

\* Art. xx. of the Church of England. But are there here sufficient remedies, in case Philosophers should want to *enslave* the people?—Philosophers should be accountable finally to the People, as Ministers of State are to the main body of the citizens.

*Du Pin*, in his negotiation with Archbishop Wake, seems to make *too* great a difference between Philosophers (as *we* call them) and people: Appendix to Mosheim.



tice established rules, may be called the *People*; those, who examine and reform such rules, divesting themselves of prejudice, are *Philosophers*.—According to this, Philosophers should search freely for truth wherever they are likely to find it: the people want only to be taught what has been already approved and ratified; and to have such sentiments inculcated, as will make them practice established duties with spirit and constancy. Philosophers should know \* good and evil; the People should know nothing that will corrupt them. Both should keep continually improving; philosophers, by their own researches; the People, by what Philosophers think it right to communicate to them, after their researches have been thoroughly digested †.

It must not be thought to be here affirmed, that, in *fact*, you can choose one set of men, who are always to guide and direct, like these supposed Philosophers, and another set, who are always to be guided ‡, *in every thing*: this is not even a part of our supposition: most men, if not all, have occasion sometimes to assume one character, and sometimes the other. He, who is a Philosopher in this matter, will be one of the People in that; nay,  
in

\* Gen. iii. 5.

† The necessity of some such distinction as this has been felt in different ages; see Wotton's *Misna*, p. 22, about *Fools* and *Wise Men*. Warburton's *Div. Leg.* about *exoteric* and *esoteric* doctrines (Index.) The Manicheans were divided into *Elect* and *Auditors*.—It should, however, be remarked, that we do not wish to keep any persons in *entire* and *perpetual* ignorance of any thing valuable; but only (like our Saviour and St. Paul) to communicate knowledge to the People as they are able to *bear* it: to let them grow *gradually*, from being *Babes* in Christ, to a fulness of *stature*.

‡ Such, however, seems to have been, in some measure, the notion of those just now mentioned, in the Note immediately preceding.

in one and the same matter, at different times, it may be right for the same person to act in different capacities; sometimes as a Philosopher, sometimes as one of the People:—When I am in my study, and thinking of a subject within my profession, I look upon myself as bound to search for truth, simply, plainly, and without reserve; to take no doctrines on trust; I am there the Philosopher; (a *lover* of wisdom no one need be afraid to call himself;)—when I go to Church for public worship, I am one of the people, a mere man, making use of the establishment, to which I belong, of its doctrines and its ceremonies, to excite in my mind right sentiments, for the purposes of life and action. I am neither Theologian, nor Critic; if I had a much meaner opinion of Sternhold and Hopkins than I at present have, I could sing their Psalms with devotion and edification.—And, surely, if a Divine makes himself one of the people in religious assemblies, much more should a Lawyer, a Physician, a Statesman; indeed, if they are treated as Philosophers in Law, Physic, and Politics, so ought a Divine to be in Religion: it will never improve *mankind*, to have more done on the authority of Lawyers and Physicians, in Law and Physic, than on the authority of Divines, in Religion. The *Religio* \* *Laici* should be founded on authority of Divines, as much as the regimen of a sick person on that of Physicians.

There may indeed be Divines, who are not such by profession; worthy to be reckoned Philosophers in that branch: no one would deny that title to Mr. Locke, Mr. Nelson, Sir Isaac Newton.—On the other hand, there may be Divines by profession, who have not sufficiently studied religious truth, to be intitled to take the lead. Both these things, however,

\* Title of Lord Herbert's Book.



however, may happen, with regard to other professions, or branches of knowledge.

Let every one be always either improving his opinions as a Philosopher, or learning to practice them as a Man.

6. One of the principal conclusions, which we would draw from what has been said on this division into Philosophers and People, is this: were there a set of men, who were merely Philosophers, in any matter, Religion by no means excepted, it would be their duty to use every means, *Ridicule* amongst the rest, of exploring, and clearing up, the truth:—the other principal conclusion is, were there a set of men, who were merely People, it would be their duty to take their knowledge, and rules of action, from the authority of Philosophers; and it would be the duty of Philosophers, and of the world at large, to refrain from using ridicule to them, and from doing or saying any thing, which could loosen their attachment to their duty, or make them negligent or light-minded about it.

The former of these conclusions, seems most likely to be contested:—but to me it appears, that mere Philosophers, if such there were, ought to examine patiently all kinds of profane and blasphemous ridicule; nay, rather seek for such methods of trying serious truth: but this is no *privilege*, it is rather a *duty*: the process might be almost as loathsome, as searching for the Philosopher's stone, or making Phosphorus; but the interests of truth would be promoted. And, if men properly qualified avoid doing this, they are shutting their eyes; they are presuming to lay aside an instrument, which God has put into their hands, lest they should do mischief with it, though they are particularly prepared for using it beneficially: they make themselves wiser than the Creator, and become punishable

punishable for the mischiefs arising from that error, which they might have escaped.

It will be more easily granted, that the People ought to be secured from the influence of profane and blasphemous scurrility, and every sort of prudence observed, which could nourish in their breasts a serious veneration for religion\*.

7. On the whole then, we ask, shall Religion be ridiculed? to Philosophers it may; to the people it may not. But this answer is only satisfactory on suppositions, which are not perfectly agreeable to fact; that men can, in practice, be divided into Philosophers and people; and that ridicule can be published to Philosophers, and concealed from the people.—Something, therefore, must be farther deduced from what has been said, which shall be more applicable to the actual state of things. But first let us consider an *illustration* of our subject, as it may confirm what is already said, and possibly furnish us with some hints, which may be of use in our last practical conclusion.

Many laws have been made against the dissection of human bodies: some, perhaps, on account of men's veneration for the dead, others possibly on principles of decency; without dwelling on the reasons of such laws, suppose we put the question, shall the human body be exposed to view in all its parts? the answer is, to the Philosopher it shall, to the people it shall not. Any reserve to the Philosopher would be a great harm to a very useful science; perfect freedom to the people would be a means of promoting vicious sentiments.

This

\* Since this was first written, things seem to have been taking a turn, with regard to the people's judging for themselves: the people are now reckoned judges of every thing: all I would say is, we must watch the *experiment*; in what has appeared *hitherto*, there is nothing convincing us of error.



This instance may serve to illustrate every thing, which has been said in the present chapter.—A person, who wrote with a view to *mankind* at large, would endeavour to reconcile reasons for and against the exposure we are speaking of; one, who wrote merely for the *present state* of things in ordinary life, would press the duties of decency and purity; and pass over the improvements in science, as smoothly as possible.—It is useful, that common persons should comply with the set of maxims *established* in their own time and country, with regard to purity, and the mutual reserve of the sexes. These may vary; be different here and at Otaheite, in this age and in the ages of chivalry; but that does not affect the general remark.—The Philosophers, in this case, are the *Anatomists* and Surgeons: with the addition of some, who are in pursuit of philosophical knowledge of an extensive sort.—Yet these ought to be under *establishments* in other things; law, politics, religion; in which they cannot get the knowledge of Philosophers, without neglecting their own department.—And the same person who, in the dissecting-room, examined all the parts of the body without distinction or reserve, should, in the common scenes of life, use caution, in order to preserve his mind uncorrupted, to keep at a distance from vicious disorder and irregular desire.—To use reserve in the dissecting-room, would be to neglect his duty; and would make him accountable for any disorders, which his unreserved search might have prevented:—to act as an anatomist in the common scenes of life, would render him obnoxious to punishment for corruption and seduction.

The illustration, which we have adopted, naturally leads us on farther to an useful remark; that, when exposure is dangerous to the people, *partial* exposure is more so than *total*. Because imagination

tion heightens and colours beyond the reality, and takes no notice of what might disgust. Nor is it checked by scruples of the moral sense; indecency, in partial exposure, gets licenced and authorized by decency. Curiosity too reasons; 'how well worth knowing must that be, which is so carefully concealed!'—but expose totally, and all false colouring vanishes; all is plain, downright fact; disappointment ensues, if not disgust. Let no flimsy coverings then be allowed; if an exposure is likely to be troublesome, prevent it wholly, or not at all: In matters relating to sensuality, I have always found, that young persons could bear in plain language, what, in affected figurative language, would have debauched their minds.

It follows, that, if *ridicule* be entered upon at all, it should be examined to the bottom: but I do not look upon ridicule as equally dangerous with sensuality; strip ridicule of its flimsy coverings, and it is usually a mere skeleton, a mere jointed baby. Ludicrous things may be thrown out, about a friend or a parent; if they do not affect you, let them pass: if they do, examine them, and they will vanish like vapour.—One should not read such a book as the *History of the Man after God's own heart*, slightly; one should either read it carefully, or not at all.

Now, having offered some illustration, and deduced from it an useful rule, we come to apply what has been said, to the actual state of things, and modify our theory for present *practice*: and therefore we must recollect, that, in reality, Philosophers and People are intermixed; how shall we compromise between them, not fettering Philosophers, and not corrupting People?—In the first place, we must never intirely neglect either: we must rather let the people be a little shocked, than absolutely  
confine



confine philosophical researches ; and we must rather restrain philosophers in some degree, than suffer the people to be set quite loose in their principles. —At different times, the line of our conduct may be different ; we must search and try what the people will bear ; though, in some sense, they are intermixed with philosophers, yet they often know but little of what is going forward, or even of what is made public, in the philosophical world.—It may be right not to have recourse to ridicule, when it can easily be avoided ; the people should not be hurt, when no compensation is made to the public : if serious argument will answer the purpose, it is more simple and definite, usually, than comic : especially as ridicule is to be examined by serious argument : ridicule may sometimes prepare the way for serious argument.—If, at any time, ridicule be thought needful, it should not be *coarse* or low ; as that lessens the respect of the people more than refined humour : nor should it be applied so as to affect particular *seasons* of devotion ; not in the time of public *worship*, or near it ; *before* or *after* ; then, even the Philosopher makes himself one of the People. Neither ought it to be levelled at *persons* particularly revered ; parents, civil governors, priests, respect towards whom facilitates many important duties : elderly people too are often in respectable *stations* ; these are the means of their losing the advantages of that free raillery, which so much improves young persons : they are often spared on account of their connexions ; and the principle, on which they are spared, should be made as extensive as possible : were I to go into a *Mahometan* country, I would never drop any thing flighting of *Mahomet*, to the *People* : nor did I ever ridicule *Relicks*, in France, or encourage Papists to do it :—it seems also wrong, and contrary to principles of general utility,

utility, to interfere with *seminaries* of education, and endeavour to root up the doctrines, which a young person has had planted in his mind, before they come to maturity; I would not, on any account, try to subvert the established principles of the youth in a seminary of Protestant *Dissenters*; (I wish Dr. Priestley had acted from the same principle to our Universities) though I would use the utmost frankness in controversy with the *leaders* of any Sect.

8. This is the best decision, concerning the use of Ridicule in Religion, to which we seem capable of arriving at present. I feel desirous to have it appear not wholly irreconcilable with Dr. *Powell's*\*. He excludes ridicule on supposition, that it excludes serious argument; we only suppose it to open men to serious argument, and we examine it by serious argument.—He proscribes it as dangerous; we allow it to be used, only when the greater danger would arise from setting it aside; and we attend to that danger, to which it might expose the ordinary people.—He speaks of it as being for practice more than speculation: we represent it as useful to virtue, and as tending to cure men of follies of every sort.

Yet I must confess, employing ridicule to make men ashamed of their *folly* in religious tenets, seems to me to be, in effect, employing it in controversy: you cannot make them ashamed, without convincing them in some sort; you cannot well reprove, without instructing, in one way or other.

9. The business of this Chapter seems now finished: but, as ridicule is rather a nice and disputed subject, it seems as if it might be worth our while, now we have entered into it pretty fully, to add a few considerations, not confining ourselves to the proper

\* Charge 1st. Discourses, p. 306.



proper subject of this Chapter, which is, the application of Ridicule to disputes about *Religion*.

In calculating the efficacy of Ridicule in corrupting the mind, we should take care not to make our calculation too high. The bad effects of ridicule are really less *durable*, than they appear likely to be: our thinking them likely to be durable, is owing to our want of experience about Ridicule: it seems generally true, that, when we are not accustomed to any sentiment, we think it less transitory than we shall find it: *La passion* \* *voit tout éternel*:—a *Boy* thinks that, if a thing once pleases him, it will always please him; and, where we are inexperienced, we are boyish.—*Disgusts* are on the same footing with pleasing sentiments; they wear off before we have had good time to fight against them. It hurts one to see a respectable *Magistrate* set in a ridiculous light, but, let him appear, and be attentive to the important business of his office; let him smile at himself, and the matter is quite at an end. Lord *Chancellor* † *Clarendon* might set at nought the bellows and the fire-shovel, when he had conducted one debate in the House of Peers.—George the Third of England has been attacked with ridicule, about making buttons, wearing a rustic dress, speaking in a quick way, &c. in a manner, which would have been considered as treasonable, or at least libellous, in some reigns; but the ridicule has had much less effect by being suffered to die away, than if it had been resisted. Could he now ‡ appear in any public place, what has been said of him would be so far from stopping the acclamations of his subjects, or their effusions of joy and affection, that it would never occur to the mind of a single person.

Some

\* *Pere de Famille* par Diderot, Acte 1. Scene 6.

† 2. 3. 5.

‡ Nov. 24, 1788. The King dangerously ill.

Some think, that ridicule, if not well founded, does not only miss its intended effect, but recoils upon the author of it\*.

10. The instances now alledged may be sufficient to prove, that the bad effects of Ridicule are transitory; but the case of *Socrates* is so particularly interesting, and has occasioned such disputes, that it seems worthy of particular mention. It is said, that, when Anytus and Melitus, the accusers of Socrates, could not make their accusations take effect against him, they hired † Aristophanes to set him in a ridiculous light, by introducing him in an humorous comedy. This Comedy, called the *Clouds*, so let Socrates down in the eyes of his Judges, so took off their respect for him, that they condemned him: and he was afterwards put to death.—Bishop Warburton, in his Dedication to the Freethinkers, gives ‡ a spirited account of this affair, which he afterwards defends in a Postscript, I think against Dr. Akenfide. He mentions it as a proof, that “raillery, in defence of vice and error,” will be “an overmatch for that employed on the side of truth and virtue.”—To account for what happened at Athens 400 years before Christ, may be difficult; we may however observe, that eloquence, serious or comic, may at any time raise a storm, whose effects may be *immediately* fatal, if there is no way of resisting them; but that this does not seem a sufficient reason for proscribing any sort of eloquence. Moreover, it is easy to see, that coarse ridicule will, at first, be more powerful than refined: and Aristophanes might consider Socrates as a Rival in wit, and a favourer of Euripides, and expose

\* Marmontel says, (*Le Bon Mari*. Vol. iii. p. 74.) Quand le ridicule n'est pas fondé, il retombe sur ceux qui le donne. [donnent?]

† See the last Argument to the *Nubes* of Aristophanes.

‡ P. 19. 8vo. p. 16. 4to.



expose him the more on that account\*. But our plan has not been to oppose ridicule to ridicule; but to confound ridicule by serious argument; *του δε γελωτα, σπυδη*. If, then, any people follow the impressions made by ridicule, without serious examination, they do not prove any thing against *us*.

Whatever might be the cause of Socrates's *Death*, there seems nothing more clear, than that no ridicule rests upon his *character*; though the *Nubes* still subsists, and is allowed to have great *vis comica*: nay, in the time of Cicero, Socrates was admired as well as now:—*Lucian* attacked him in a dialogue†, but the modern admiration of his character seems to be higher‡ than even the ancient.—The *Nubes* would not probably have the effect

\* The *Nubes* of Aristophanes might operate upon the Athenians in several ways: 1. It might debase their *taste* in general, and so give them a dislike to all refined lively reasoning. 2. It might give them a general prejudice against *Socrates*; against every thing belonging to him: especially it would have this effect on such as were not used to correct their feelings by their Reason. It requires a good deal of care to avoid a disgust against those, who are made to appear before us for a good while together in an odious, contemptible light. 3. It might make Socrates appear an enemy to those *Gods*, which they had been most used to revere; as Jupiter Pluvius, Jupiter Tonans, Apollo Patrius; (Potter, Vol. i. p. 75.) and to prefer to these very silly Gods; the Clouds, Air, &c. 4. It would make Socrates odious, by representing him as teaching men the ways of evading common justice and honesty, by sophistical reasoning.—In Strepsiades's evading the demands of his Creditors, there is as much implied as if Aristophanes had said; ‘Now you think this very absurd reasoning of Strepsiades, when he is trying to escape his Creditors, yet it is the very same kind of sophistry, by which Socrates evades the sentence of the Areopagus.’ (that Socrates would be tried by the *Areopagus*. see Potter, Vol. i. p. 102, 105.—but he had 281 voters against him, besides what he had for him: these might easily be affected by the Play, and the eloquence of the accusers.)

† Between Menippus and Cerberus.

‡ See Warb. Ded. to the Freethinkers, as before. Diderot's Comedies, Vol. ii. p. 203.

effect now, which it had formerly, even if it were well performed.

It is natural to mention, that the attacks of *Celsus* upon our Saviour have now as little effect as those of *Aristophanes* upon *Socrates*. *Celsus* has some ridicule upon *Wood*, with allusion to the *Cross*, and to the residence of *Jesus* in the house of a *Carpenter*, but it is vapid; and we should be very glad to have the works of *Celsus* intire, whatever profane buffoonery they may contain.

11. It seems worth while to say a word or two more \* on Ridicule, as being *peculiar* to man. *Mr. Cole*, in his elegant Dissertation, when he sums up his considerations relating to it, † exhorts us to cultivate *Reason* in preference to it, alledging, that *Reason* is assigned us by God, and *distinguishes* man from brute. But may not this be said of Ridicule, as much as of reason? The *Reason of animals* has at least been considered by a Philosopher ‡ as a subject of discussion, but we have settled, that Brutes have no pretensions to ridicule, worth speaking of.—Whatever is peculiar to human nature, must surely deserve the serious attention of mankind.—Experience gives us no room to conclude, that we have any faculty, which is not worthy of cultivation; indeed, every faculty we have seems capable of endless improvement.—Had we only a Proboscis, that was peculiar to us, we ought to study it; but, if a peculiarity turns upon the highest part of our nature, (which the moral part certainly is,) is it not right to conclude, that it is intended for good ends of an high and important sort?—what these ends particularly are, must be found out by trials; and the immediate view of these trials must be, to extract all possible good from ridicule, and to clear that

\* See before, Chap. iii. Sect. 12.

† P. 16.

‡ *Mr. Hume*. See his *Essays*.



that good, as much as possible, from all evil which may at first seem to adhere to it. We might, even now, expect to find such good as present cheerfulness, and alleviation of care and anxiety; an antidote against calamity, when it would poison the sources of our happiness; a preventive against folly and absurdity: and we should soon allow, that there could be nothing essentially evil in that, which makes men mutually attract each other, which gives a strong impression of impropriety;—and which makes the powerful sentiment of shame act in support of decency and good sense.

12. Those, who wish to suppress ridicule, alledge however *evils*, which it has in fact occasioned: there seems no doubt, that it has occasioned evils; but the question is, whether those evils arise out of ridicule itself, or only out of *abuses* of ridicule\*? — *In general* it must be allowed, that the abuses of any faculty do not justify the suppressing of it: if that were the case, *all* our faculties must be suppressed; for they are all made so as to be liable to abuse (in that consists our probation,) and they all are abused frequently. Reason, imagination, every passion, appetite, sentiment, comes under this remark. When *Laws* are made, they are abused, but they are not therefore repealed. When *Liberty* is given, it is abused, but not on that account wholly taken away, though sometimes regulated, in different degrees.

We may, therefore, enumerate some abuses of Ridicule; it will not follow, from the enumeration, that Ridicule is to be entirely suppressed; but only, that those abuses are to be considered, and prevented as much as possible.—Till ridicule is permitted, we cannot make experiments upon it, nor  
therefore

\* In the Heads of Lectures there is here an error; abuses of *Religion* is printed instead of abuses of *Ridicule*, in one Edition.

therefore can we get to understand it.—We may make the enumeration serve as a sort of *recapitulation*. If ridicule is thrown upon any subject, and those, to whom it is addressed, accept and acquiesce in it without examination by serious argument, such acquiescence is an *abuse*.

If faults, which, in a well-regulated mind, would excite abhorrence or *detestation*, are ridiculed, there ridicule is misapplied. Ridicule may always be said to be abused, when it is not used with a *view* to promoting *Truth* or *Virtue*:—one might add, that such view, or purpose, should not be designedly *concealed*: and farther, that we can scarce conceive any one to have this view, who ridicules a subject *at random*; before he understands much of it. As ridicule is to examine serious argument, and serious argument ridicule, it may be considered as an abuse, when ridicule is applied to *answer ridicule*:—a thing, which generally appears to be *ineffectual* as to all useful purposes.—To *neglect*, or refuse to apply, any good remedy, may, in some sense, be called making a wrong use of that remedy: in this sense, those, whom we have called Philosophers, abuse ridicule, (abuse at least the goodness of the Creator,) when they neglect or refuse to apply it.—One of the principal and most striking abuses of ridicule, is, when it is used at wrong times and *seasons*, so as to hurt the principles of those in *particular*, to whom it is addressed: as when it makes the parent contemptible to the child, the Instructor to the Pupil, the Magistrate to the Subject, the Master to the Servant, and so on; or when it occasions levity, or negligence, about the only obligations of religion, or morality, whose force is acknowledged.—Allied to this will be that abuse, which takes place, when ridicule only works by *hints* and insinuations; seeming tender about exposing,



posing, and affecting decency, and yet making the object appear more ridiculous by the use of reserve.

—There seems none of these abuses, which might not be remedied; and, if that were the case after a perfect enumeration, we might say, that all the evils of ridicule are capable of being prevented or removed\*.

13. Perhaps the most effectual method of removing the evils of ridicule would be, for men of parts and taste, virtuous at the same time and religious, to give specimens of the right sort of it; in religious subjects, or others; though some care might moreover be requisite, to have them rightly received and applied.—We have not many instances of the sort here supposed: *Addison's* humour is the nearest perfection of any I know; but *Swift* is very masterly. *Lucian* and he put me in mind of each other, in their easy dryness; but *Lucian* runs into the abuse of undermining the principles of the people. *Eachard* is well worthy of mention. *Sterne* aims to ridicule false science, and, indeed, as far as he does it properly and effectually, he is a supporter of *truth*; which observation applies to the authors of the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*. *Sterne* has powers of ridicule, but I believe those, who have read *Rabelais*, think *Sterne* less original than he is generally thought. His chief services to virtue and religion

\* These *abuses* might be thus briefly enumerated; and in a different order: 1. *Neglecting* the instrument committed to man by Providence. 2. Using Ridicule, when an action ought to be *detested*. 3. Using ridicule in return for ridicule. 4. Using it for any ends, but promoting *Truth* and *Virtue*: which would include using it at *random*. Here too our motive should be *professed* and *visible*. 5. Affecting reserve and decency, so as to make a *partial* exposure of a fault. 6. Using ridicule *unseasonably*; so as to hurt *particularly* those, to whom it is addressed. 7. In the above, a man is *active*:—when he is *passive*, or *receives* ridicule; it is an abuse, if he does not give it a *serious* examination: which includes making a partial exposure to be *total*.

religion have been in those parts of his writings, which are not humourous.—The story of Le Fevre has great merit; and the speech to the fly, “go thy way,” &c. has, I believe, saved the lives of many hundreds of animals.—Indeed, he has drawn a character of a Clergyman, who attacks, with delicate and benevolent ridicule, every luxuriancy of truth and virtue: the fate of *Yorick* was not totally unlike that of *Socrates*; delicate ridicule brought on them both the envy and enmity of the coarse and vulgar, to their destruction.

But Sterne makes this personage with, there was no \* such thing as a *polemic Divine*: and he introduces † a piece of humour, which I may not rightly understand; a contest between *Gymnast* (γυμναστής was the teacher of the youths, who were to contend in the *Gymnasia*) and *Tripet*; in the stile perhaps of ancient chivalry or horsemanship, to shew, that controversy is all made up of useless contention and ostentatious flourishes.—We have only to remark, that he only ridicules controversy in its worst state, not such as we have conceived, nor such as we believe to be practicable.

Bishop Warburton observes ‡, as has been before mentioned, that whatever good *Cervantes* and *Butler* may have done by writing *Don Quixote* and *Hudibras*, they have done much *harm*; the one to “real honour,” the other to “sober piety:” without denying the fact, we may ask, whether they did not do much more *good* than harm upon the whole? It is a common thing, when a person has received benefit in sickness from a course of medicine, to say, he is well, but he is weakened by the discipline, which he has been obliged to undergo:—But this is not always thought a reason against administering

\* Vol. iv. (Edit. in 6 Vols.) Chap. xxviii. † Chap. xxix.

‡ Dedication to Freethinkers, p. 18. 8vo.



administering the same remedies again, on similar occasions. It seems the condition of our nature, that we receive evil with good; at least, we find this in every thing at present, though it does seem in the power of man to keep diminishing the evil, without limit.—Ridicule is often found arm in arm with profane levity and vicious licentiousness; our friend gets connected with our enemies; but we are not, for that reason, to attack the group promiscuously; we should first separate our friend, and then treat our enemies as the case may require.—Whatever incidental evil may have arisen from the comic work of Cervantes, so judicious a writer as the Author of the *Tatler* has since said, that *Duelling* should be attacked with ridicule first, before it is attacked with grave reasoning: and I think Fielding has shewn, by his *Colonel Bath*, the justness of the remark.

We must not quite pass over Mr. *Foot*: he has a festivity, which is very enlivening, and he knew prevailing manners so well, as to ridicule them very happily; but he was too *ignorant* \* of *Religion* to ridicule even its abuses with propriety.—When he ridicules abuses of the scriptural doctrines concerning the influence of the Holy Spirit, the shock, which he gives, is too strong. He seems not only to want theological knowledge, but knowledge of the human mind; or attention in entering into the feelings of rational Christians. Still, I would not fly from his ridicule, I would examine it gravely, in order to form an useful judgment from it; as a medical person would examine some things disgusting in their nature.—I can conceive the very abuses, which he ridicules, to be ridiculed, by Addison, or others, in such a manner as not to hurt my feelings. Eachard's † account of Parson *Slipstocking*,

\* Sect. 12. No one who is ignorant of the rules of *good-breeding*, can ridicule false politeness with effect.

† Contempt of the Clergy.

*Slipstocking*, relates to the influence of the Holy Spirit, as well as Foote's ridicule, but it does not give me a very painful shock\*.

I conclude this account of Authors with the mention of one or two now living; Madame *De Sillery-Brulart*, (late Madame Genlis) and Monsr. *Berquin*. In their pleasing, moral, affecting dramas†, I find a *mixture of comic and ethic*, which is peculiarly powerful; it has, from many readers, drawn tears in torrents; of the most delicious kind; I wish some student in the higher parts of criticism, (which include the emotions of the mind,) would examine this mixture;—one may see, that the comic makes the virtue so unaffected and unpretending, as greatly to heighten the merit and the effect of it: but the more it was examined, the more clearly would the use and excellence of ridicule appear, when rightly refined and judiciously applied.

14. In *private life* I think I have known ridicule employed much as I should wish it to be in controversy; not amongst the licentious, but amongst the most virtuous and religious persons I ever had the happiness to converse with: employed with cheerfulness and kindness; with frankness, but with delicacy and respect; mutually offered and received; such

\* Mr. Sheridan's *Joseph Surface*, in the *School for Scandal*, is, in my judgment, an hurtful piece of humour; sentiments are expressed as ridiculous, which really every honest man feels:—I think this the case; but the Play has not been published, and I have only seen it once, and that in the year 1777: Ridicule is, in this play, very useful in exposing censoriousness pretending to *candour*.

† Particularly those contained in the 4th Vol. of the *Theatre of Education*; and the larger pieces in *L'Ami des Enfants*.

I have met with instances of the same kind of mixture now and then in other writings, but I have seen nothing so efficacious. The humour of Sailors in the midst of danger, makes something of the same sort of mixture; but the compound is less refined.



such ridicule is rather flattering than wounding, as it implies great candour and sweetness in those, to whom it is addressed.

Men are often thought to be more offended by raillery, than they really are; they shew some *confusion*, and that is thought to be merely *anger*, when really it springs from various causes. Sometimes, even the fear of seeming offended will occasion it; sometimes, mortification at discovering an unknown fault, or vexation at the misrepresentations of the world. This kind of confusion often interrupts mutual raillery, when the person, who is confused, would, after a very short interval, shew an earnest desire to continue it.

I fear Dr. *Brown*, who is commended by Bishop Warburton\* for writing well upon Ridicule, wanted a little of its help himself towards the latter part of his life. Some negotiation about his furnishing a set of Laws for *Russia*, with other causes, made him, if I remember right, run into an excess of seriousness; I fear he became seriously vain and proud: I fear,—but I will only add, that Ridicule well applied, and applied in time, might have been his best medicine.—Some of the Clergy, who live retired, are apt also, I fear, to become too serious; the moderate use of delicate and respectful ridicule might, in some cases, take off that seeming moroseness, that apparent rancour, with which they are sometimes apt to speak of the faults of their neighbours; meaning only honest indignation; and perhaps be a means, in other instances, of preventing the *contrary extreme*; for he, who prevents one extreme, often prevents another: *Socrates* must have been very pleasing in private life, and his wit must have had a great tendency to check such excesses as these.—I should be curious to know, whether

\* Ded. to Freethinkers, page 20. 8vo.

ther Sterne thought of Socrates, in drawing *Yorick*, or Fielding in drawing \* *Dr. Harrison*? Some of the greatest men I have ever heard converse, have excelled in delicate and well-bred ridicule †.

15. The *Scriptures* have, I think, been considered by some, as *adverse* to the use of ridicule; if they *forbad* the use of it, we must conclude ourselves mistaken in our reasoning, but that does not appear to be the case. All Scripture seems to be occasional, and the occasions, on which the different parts were written, are serious; so that men might have written gravely upon them, who, in common discourse, did not discard humour intirely. — It has been said ‡, that *Jesus* never was known to laugh; it may be so; extensive views, business, sufferings, compassion, might possibly prevent it: at the marriage at *Cana*, he must have been amidst festive conversation; and he miraculously provided wine, which maketh glad the heart of man. — Though he was sometimes indignant at hypocrisy, he says of it what may be taken in a ludicrous light: the *gnat* § and the camel were both unclean animals amongst the Jews; the swallowing of the latter was exaggeration, and of a kind not very serious: the *picture* of Hypocrites scrupulously philtering, lest they should be so unfortunate as to swallow an unclean insect, and then gobbling down a great unclean beast, has not much gravity in it: and what is represented by it, namely, great nicety in

\* In *Amelia*.

† Mr. Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord North, when first Minister; Sir George Savile, Dr. Balguy, Mr. Gray, Mr. Mason, Dr. Paley; not to venture upon a greater number of instances; though I have some in my mind's eye; equally apt, if not equally known.

‡ In the *Spectator*, I think; or some other work of great excellence.

§ Matt. xxiii. 24.



in some things, and great want of nicety in others, makes a *contrast* of itself, which might excite some feeling of ridicule.—Our Saviour, in his teaching, did not want to make slight and superficial impressions; however, he says nothing against the use of ridicule, as we wish it to be used.—Nor do his *Apostles*. *Ευτραπελία* is forbidden\*, but it was probably low buffoonery and obscenity, or what we call *double entendre*. Let any one read the context; and Parkhurst's account of *ευτραπελία*, and Locke's note on *πλεονεξία*: they both refer to *Hammond*, who is learned and judicious upon the subject.—Christians are repeatedly told, that they are to *rejoice* evermore, that is, *habitually*; an habitual cheerfulness cannot well be conceived, without some mixture of comic pleasantry; it must be frequently *familiar*.—The righteous are to be glad and rejoice in the Lord; and the true † of heart to be joyful: this, indeed, is from the Old Testament: in the Old Testament, there are several passages about Idolatry, which contain humour; and their being controversial, as it were, makes them the more to our purpose: we might instance in ‡ Elijah's mocking the Priests of Baal, and several passages § of Isaiah.

As to Lord *Shaftesbury's* || saying, that the Scriptures are humorous, I only look upon that as his method of treating them with derision.

The *Church of England* cannot be supposed to look upon Ridicule as contrary to the Scriptures, because she uses it with regard to the superstitions of the Church of Rome¶.

16. We

\* Ephes. v. 4. † Psalm xxxii. 11 or 12.

‡ 1 Kings xviii. 27. § Isaiah xliv. 16, 17.

|| *Characteristics*, Vol. iii. Miscellany 2. Chap. iii. or *Leland's View*, p. 57. 4th Edit.

¶ See Homily on good works, Part 3d. p. 43 and 45. 8vo.

16. We need be the less discouraged about using ridicule, as it appears, I think, pretty plain, that all use it, when they are able. Even those writers who condemn the use of it in others, use it themselves. I have always conceived, that Mr. John Wesley would be shocked at any levity concerning theological subjects, (though, to say the truth, I am not acquainted with any part of his works, in which he directly says so; I am not well read in his works;)—but I once heard him preach concerning Demoniacs a discourse, the controversial part of which was humourous; that is, contained comic strictures, of a refined and ingenious sort, upon his adversaries.—And I am told, from good authority, that he has great comic powers\*.—But Bishop Warburton is more to our purpose, as we have seen him contending against the use of ridicule. I will select a few passages from that very Dedication to the Freethinkers, in which we have already found his arguments.—He compares † the Freethinkers to a *Sir Martin* in a Comedy of Dryden's, on account of their continuing, through imitation and affectation, needlessly to complain of want of *Liberty* ‡; “all the rest, says he, is merely Sir Martin; it is continuing to fumble at the lute, though the music has been long over.”—He commends a fine piece of controversial *Irony*, written against Freethinkers§.—He compares the mixture of seriousness and ridicule found in their writings, to the character of Bayes's Actor in the Rehearsal||.—He compares ridicule in controversy to chewed Bullets¶; and to Marius's darts‡;—indeed, he owns, that the “disposition towards unseasonable mirth drives all parties upon being witty, where they

\* Since this was written, Mr. John Wesley is dead, but that does not seem to make the instance less apt.

† P. 4. 8vo.

‡ P. 4. 8vo.

§ P. 5.

|| P. 8.

¶ P. 22.

‡ P. 10.



they can, as being conscious of its powerful operation in controversy\*.

17. The result of what has been said on the subject of ridicule seems to be this;—ridicule ought to be studied; experimentally, as far as possible; that is, its abuses, and the evils arising from them, should be marked and defined; and its uses brought to light, and made clear and evident.—In specifying its *abuses* and mischiefs, we should condemn all vicious levity, all incautious allusion, or painting, which could occasion scandal to the well-meaning, or loosen principles not likely to have others immediately substituted in their room: though we should own, that more hazard might safely be run, than would at first be imagined.

In settling the *uses* of ridicule, we should determine, that it might be the means of shewing to ourselves and our friends those faults, which most impeded our advancement in useful knowledge, virtue, and Religion. It might hinder us from being pedantic, self-satisfied, proud, hypocritical; or from running into fanaticism, or superstition. And, if it were cultivated by men of abilities and talents; of polished minds, and amiable dispositions, it might, when mixed with worthy and pious sentiments, give such a grace and beauty to virtue and religion, as would make them universally loved and desired.

\* P. 10.

## C H A P. V.

## CANONS OF CONTROVERSY.

HAVING examined the nature of controversy, and the good and bad qualities of those, who engage in carrying it on; and having spoken pretty largely of the use and abuse of ridicule, I come now to mention, as the result of our disquisitions, some rules or *Laws* of Controversy, to which recourse may be had, when any doubts arise concerning the rectitude of any manner of disputing.

When Laws are proposed, it is natural to ask, how are they to be *inforced*? where do you find an authority or power to carry them into execution? I fear we have nothing to trust to, in fact, but the apprehensions, which most men have of going against the general sense of reputable and judicious people; we know, that, in what are called affairs of honour, nay, in public as well as in private war, the ignominy arising from general blame and contempt acts very forcibly; why might we not hope for the same kind of obedience and submission, if we could get Laws of controversy as well established as Laws of Honour already are? It would contribute something to this desirable end, if Laws were only defined, and published.

But it might assist our *imagination*, and give a greater dignity and consequence to each Law, if we conceived some great *Synod*, which should recognize our Laws, and pronounce sentence on such as should violate them. *Louis XIV.* of France had some idea of forming a great council by delegates from different states, in order to settle and enforce the



the rights of *Nations*: why may not we imagine a Council formed by delegates from different national *Churches*? were such a council actually to meet, their Laws would probably be called *Canons*; we will therefore use that term.—Our Council might be both *legislative* and *judicial*: its punishments might be disgrace, expunging blameable expressions, &c.—the very idea of such a council might have its use; it would occasion the greater interest, and greater *distinctness*, when it was said, that A had broken the 4th Canon, B the 6th,—and so forth: and those might submit to a rule or Law made *beforehand*, who would not submit to an observation made in their own particular case.

Canon 1.—Let no one be allowed to take any part in controversy, who will not at all times be ready to proclaim, when called upon, “I may be in an *error*.” or even to *wear* something, on which those words should be inscribed.—In the heat of controversy, men forget the numberless sources of error, which are really in every controverted subject, especially in Theology\* and Metaphysics. Hence presumption, confidence, arrogant language; all which greatly obstruct the clearing up of truth. Any expedient to set these in their true light, and make men sensible of the folly of them, must be very serviceable; and it seems scarcely possible for men to persist in them, who acknowledged in a solemn manner, that they were continually liable to error.

To obviate mistakes, we will just observe, that there may be cases, in which the opposite language may be held; a Priest may say to one of his own Catechumens, ‘I am not to be considered by *you* as liable to error;’ that is, ‘you are most likely to keep free from error, if, for the present, you follow my

\* Dr. Balguy, Charge v. as before.

my advice and judgment.' But here the case is very different from that which is supposed, when we speak of controversy; this is the case of one of the People receiving his opinions from a Philosopher; but, in controversy, the contending parties are equally Philosophers.

Canon 2.—All expressions of *self-sufficiency* shall bring disgrace on him, who uses them.—He uses such expressions, who calls his own cause the cause of God, and his own interpretation, the word of God; who insults others, and demeans himself as if he acted upon demonstration, instead of probability. Self-sufficient expressions are hurtful, as they tend to prevent the chief end of controversy; which is, the ascertaining of truth, by the removal of all that error, which is apt to get intermixed with it.—They have also some mischiefs in common with some other faults.

Should any one think this second canon too nearly allied to the first, let him reflect, that the faults implied in them are distinct, and would require distinct charges. A person may possibly own himself fallible, in form, and yet may use self-sufficient expressions; or he may use them, when he has never been called upon to declare himself fallible.

Canon 3. All expressions, which are judged *unmeaning* as to the matter in dispute, shall be expunged by authority, with disgrace to him who uses them.

All expressions are unmeaning, which contain no part of an argument: which are declamatory; which one side has as much right to use as the other.—And those might be added, which are used as technical, pedantic, ostentatious, or are borrowed from Systems not understood \*: or which, in any way, miss the question.

All

• See Dr. Balguy, p. 193.



All these throw a mist over the truth, and hinder it from being clearly discerned: they set the ideas, which ought to be compared, at a distance from each other; and interpose objects, which prevent their agreement\* or disagreement from appearing distinctly.

Canon 4. Whoever uses *personal* reflexions in controversy shall be deemed an enemy to truth.—What these are, needs no explanation.—Archbishop *Sharp* says, “Men’s † persons are sacred things.” And what if A were a dull man, B a pert forward man, C a sot, D an hypocrite, and so on? all men have faults, and men who have different faults have written truths, and men with different good qualities have written falsehoods. So that personal reflexions, though founded in truth, help nothing forward.—In effect, they greatly retard and obstruct mental improvement.—They prevent even just reasoning from being accepted by common men; and, when any one is so uncommonly candid, as to examine arguments, in which he is abused, he must meet with difficulties and hindrances; he must have a shock of resentment and indignation to overcome, which cannot but require time and attention; and so divert his attention from the argument.

How much better than using personal abuse would it be, for a man to say to his adversary, ‘you think this way, I think that; there is no need for us to feel the least personal ill will to each other; let us, as friends, go hand in hand, and see if we cannot find out what it is, that occasions our difference of opinion’

Canon 5. Let no one accuse his adversary of *indirect* motives.

It

\* Locke 4. 1. 2.

† Sermons, Vol. 1. Ser. 1. 5thly.

It is not unfrequent in controversy for men to speak, as if an adversary did not really believe what he said; as if he used arguments, not from opinion, but because it served some purpose of interest; because it supported some cause, in which he was joined.—To speak thus is, in reality, to make a personal reflexion, but it seems proper to observe separately, that arguments are to be answered equally, whether he who offers them is sincere or not: nay, if we knew him to be insincere, we must answer them; we cannot do so the less, when we reflect, that we have no way of knowing whether he really be sincere or not.—To inquire into his motives then is useless; to ascribe indirect ones to him, is worse than useless; it is hurtful.

Sometimes, however, the case is such, that it seems as if we were not bound to take men in the literal sense, when they profess their motives for writing;—they make pretences which, to a private friend, they would undoubtedly own are not to be understood literally:—these are sometimes intended to ward off danger, or prevent legal prosecution. Of this sort is the conclusion of Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles; Lord Shaftesbury's account of the pleasantries of the Scriptures, referred to before\*.—I used to think Woolston's profession a strong instance of this, but, from farther consideration of his Life and character†, I doubt whether it is: I rather think it is not: which may be a warning (to me at least) against judging hastily in such matters. In *action*, we must follow *probability*: we must not, in defending ourselves, run into such excess of candour as to think men better than they are; but, whatever they are, when we come to *contend* with them, we must observe and obey the *Laws* of contention.

Canon

\* Chap. iv. Sect. 15. † See i. 16. 17.



Canon 6. They are to be censured, who charge the *consequences* of doctrines upon those, who only hold the doctrines themselves.

This is one of the most common faults of controversy; but, though the consequences are rightly drawn, it is unjust to take for granted, that our adversaries hold them\*; how does it appear, that they ever drew *any* consequences? perhaps they might rather give up the original doctrine, than embrace that, which has been deduced from it: the deduction might to them disprove the doctrine:—And the injustice is still greater, if the consequences are not rightly deduced; which may frequently be the case. Moreover, the consequences charged are generally of a practical nature, and they are said to be held, when they really are not;—in this way, the fault gets to be an imputation of *vice*, and therefore provokes (at the same time that it perplexes) in the manner of a *personal* reflexion.

Men are led into this imputing of consequences, by reasoning against their adversaries in the way of the *reductio ad absurdum*†; if, from any proposition, absurd propositions follow, it is rightly concluded, that the original proposition is false; but it cannot be rightly concluded, that the adversaries maintain those absurd propositions; that is a question only of *fact*.—The ‡ *Manicheans* held, that the Gospels were not written by Apostles, or even by apostolical men; to disprove this opinion, it has been urged, if so, the Gospels must be of no validity; which is an *absurd* thing for any set of Christians to maintain: the reasoning seems right; but it seems equally right to say, that, “if that be the consequence of their principle, they did not see it.”—  
They

\* See Abp. Sharp, Vol. i. Ser. 1. 4thly.

† Chap. ii. Sect. 13.

‡ See Lardner's Works, Vol. iii. p. 519, 520.

They reasoned ill, but still they did not maintain, or *mean* to maintain, that the Gospels were of no authority.

Canon 7. It is unlawful to refer any saying of an Adversary to a *Party*.

This is done, when it is said, this is downright Popish superstition, Scotch Philosophy, Irish blundering; these are rank Tory principles, fine high-church doctrines.

That this is wrong, appears from hence; it scarce ever happens, that, when an opinion is referred to a *Party*, it is not first distorted, stretched, in short *changed*, in order to make it fit the place where it is to be put. Or if, at any time, the opinion is not changed, it gets to be differently esteemed;—if you see a person, for the first time, in bad company, you have a very different idea of him from what you would have, if you had seen him in good company:—thus the judgment gets biaſſed by prejudice, and free and candid inquiry is prevented:—throwing odium upon any person has, moreover, the effect of provoking, which obstructs the investigation of truth in the manner before \* described.

Canon 8. Whoever shall be convicted of the misapplication of *Ridicule* in controversy, shall be *censured*, according to the particular circumstances of his case.

The abuses of ridicule having been very lately enumerated, I will give no description of them here. Suffice it to say, that, as men will bear more freedom of ridicule at some times than at others, and ridicule will be more *refined* at one time than another, there should be conceived a separate set of rules relating to ridicule, to be changed from time to time. The general principles, on which they

• Sect. 4.



they should be founded, are, not to debase or corrupt the minds of the people; and, to apply ridicule in such a manner, as to rouse men from their prejudices and faults, and set them on thinking for themselves; and, at the same time, make them open to the advice of those, who are best qualified to think for them.

9. We will not proceed any farther in forming Canons of controversy; that would look, as if we really meant to compile a *complete* set: whereas, our intention is rather to suggest an idea, than to execute a plan. To make an useful code of Laws, many counsellors seem required, and an exact knowledge of the state of things. Even when these are to be had, and Laws are made, evasions, and new modes of offending will require new Laws continually.

In the Canons, which we have proposed, we have not kept up to the strict notion of three parties in controversy; we have rather conceived two parties, for the sake of coming nearer to the kind of controversy, which actually prevails; to regulate that must be the most useful. What change is made by transferring controversy from three to two, has been shewn in the second \* Chapter. Upon the whole, it seems as if it would be best for controversialists, when there are but two parties, to consider themselves merely as advocates, making the world the judge.—A mixture of characters, which occasions a confusion; so that none of them are thoroughly supported, seems to do more harm than could arise from Advocates regarding only one side of a question, professedly.

10. Nothing can so well prove the want of some Canons of controversy, as giving *instances* of the violation of those, which we have proposed. But  
I will

I will not refer you to a multiplicity of authors; I will select chiefly from one; an Author deservedly admired for both Genius and Learning: I mean the Author of the Divine Legation of Moses. I conceive this Author to be as able an *Advocate* as ever wrote:—in the light of what we call a *Judge*, he seems somewhat less estimable.

Canon 1. Against denying the possibility of error.

There may be the fewer instances of violating this Canon, as it is levelled chiefly at the general stile of Controversy.

Bishop Warburton mentions \* an author, who has evinced a truth “beyond the *possibility* of a reply.” It would have been an hard matter to evince any truth so to Bishop Warburton: his fertility in reply was infinite.

Canon 2. Against expressions of *self-sufficiency*.

Bishop Warburton † says, “All that has befallen me in defence of *Religion* is only the railings of the vile and impotent.”—No one should be so self-sufficient as to call himself a defender of *Religion*, so as to imply, that other Christians are *not* defenders of Religion. *All* sects of Christians defend what they think true Religion.

The same Author speaks ‡ of his adversary as opposing him, “in open defiance of the Prophets and the Apostles, of Moses and of Jesus Christ.”—That is, the Bishop implies, that he had these *undoubtedly* on his side: whereas, the end and purpose of the debate was, to determine what was their real meaning: both sides acknowledged their *authority*.

Canon 3. Against *unmeaning* expressions.

Bishop Warburton uses frequently *declamatory* expressions, which his opponents have an equal right

\* D. L. Vol. iv. p. 122.

† D. L. Vol. iv. p. 134.

‡ D. L. Vol. iv. p. 123. Note.



right to use. "Something \* is to be allowed to a weak cause." The Freethinkers are charged with "an unnatural mixture of scepticism † and dogmatizing."—He says to them, "you have done your worst; you should think of growing better ‡."—An expression equally declamatory is this; "But what follows is such unaccountable jargon §!"—Such instances as these might easily be multiplied. It is as easy for any one to call Bishop Warburton 'our holy *Prelate*,' as it is for him to say, 'our learned Doctor, or Professor.'—It is as obvious for one side as the other, to use that common form, "If you had given yourself the trouble to examine, you *must* have been convinced."

With regard to *missing the question*, see Dr. Jortin's six Dissertations ||.

*Unintelligible* expressions are exposed in the *Provincial Letters*; and in Voltaire's *History of Jansenism*, and *Quietism*, in his *Age of Louis XIV.*—See also Mosheim, 12th Cent. 2. 3. 15. about the sense, in which an Incarnate God might be at the same time the *offerer* and the *oblation*.

Mosheim † says, that "the opinions of Nestorius and the Council which condemned him, were the same in effect."—To bring about a condemnation, when this is the case, the expressions must have been *unmeaning*.

Canon 4. Against *personal* reflexions.

We do but find too many instances of the violation of this Canon. We may take one from a passage already referred to ¶.—"All that has befallen me, &c. is only the railings of the vile and impotent: and all that is likely to befall him, is only the ridicule of all besides." The person meant by

\* Ded. to Freethinkers; p. 7.

† Ibid. p. 40.

‡ Ibid. p. 44. § D. L. Vol. iv. p. 137. || P. 51, 52.

† Mosh. 5th Cent. 2. 5. 9.

¶ D. L. Vol. iv. p. 134.

by "*him*," was the very respectable Dr. Rutherford.

Bishop Warburton, speaking \* of a writer in favour of Christianity; and of the Freethinkers as his accusers, says; "the word of his accusers is not apt to go very far with me."

Jonathan *Edwards*, speaking† about *Hobbes*, says, "this great truth, that Jesus is the Son of God, was not spoiled, because it was once and again proclaimed with a loud voice by the Devil."—He is here defending himself against the charge of being an *Hobbist*: perhaps he might not *mean* to abuse *Hobbes*: but only to argue with his opponents on their own suppositions.

The ‡ *Socinian* controversy affords still too many instances of violations of this Canon.—See Letter to Bishop Hallifax, p. 29. and his reply, naming Mr. Blackall as the writer.

Mr. *Frend* is adding to the number.

Canon 5. Against ascribing *indirect* views to adversaries.

"Such insinuations" (says Warburton § to the Freethinkers) are amongst your arts of controversy."

He also charges them|| (whether *truly* or not, does not seem to be the question) with "the low cunning of pretending still to lie under restraints."

But there is so capital an instance in Dr. Priestley's History † of the Corruptions of Christianity, that we need produce no other.—It is too long to transcribe, but it makes the concluding remark of the three first parts of his work.—I will read it to you.

"You

\* Deq. to Freethinkers, p. 6.

† On Free-will, p. 322. Part 4. Sect. 7.

‡ See a short Defence of the Doctrine of Atonement, p. 92. from Graham, about having as much occasion for *Gibbets* as Churches.

§ P. 7. 8vo.

|| P. 4.

† Vol. I. p. 326.



“ You *industriously* keep out of sight all the limitations,” &c. Blackall to Dr. Hallifax, p 29.

Canon 6. Against charging the *consequences* of Doctrines upon those, who only maintain the Doctrines themselves.

The *Socinians* keep constantly, in spite of all answers, charging the Trinitarians with denying the Unity of God, and the Humanity of Christ\*.

Archbishop King, in his Sermon on Fore-knowledge†, has a passage to our purpose.

Stillington Bishop of Worcester opposes Mr. Locke on Identity, as if Mr. Locke brought into doubt the Christian Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body; though Mr. Locke maintained that Doctrine.

See Archbishop Sharp, Vol. 1. Ser. 1.—4thly.—See a good recommendation of this Canon in Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers‡, from Bishop Taylor's Liberty of prophesying.

*Nestorius* suffered through want of attention to this Canon. See Mosheim, 5th Cent. 2. 5. 9.

If the *Epicureans* had been charged with the consequences of their Doctrines, Cicero observes that they would have been very different persons from what he found them: for Epicureans and Stoics see Encyclopédie, Vol. 1. p. 809. col. 2. and 810§.

If we are *Christians*, we must be *slaves*: this is in substance the remark of Machiavelli, quoted in Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion||.

A Chinese Philosopher, reasoning against the Doctrine of Foë, viz. that the Body is only a dwelling for the soul; urges†, that Foë must wish to root

\* Racov. Cat. p. 99.

† Sect. 33, 36.

‡ P. 82.

§ See something to the purpose of this Canon, Lardner's Heresies, B. 1. Sect. 17.

|| Essays, 8vo. Vol. ii. p. 455.

† Spirit of Laws, Book 24. Chap. xix. Note.

root out of the heart the virtue of Love of Parents ("Parens;") he must make their *persons* despicable.

It would seem odd to *us* to charge those, who preach the immortality of the soul, with encouraging *Suicide*: yet we are told, that Suicide has, in fact, been the consequence of that doctrine. It generally happens, that the consequences charged do *not* follow in fact:—but, though they do sometimes, they may not always.—I do not know, after all, whether the *Predestinarians*, and *Necessitarians*, as good Christians and as good men as any others, have not suffered most by having consequences of their opinions charged upon them.

I have given the more instances under this Canon, as it has seemed to want explanation; and as instances under it seem to improve and *enlarge* the mind: and to have a tendency to prevent that fault in controversy, into which reasoning and well-meaning men are most likely to fall.

Canon 7. Against referring things to *Party*.

Bishop Warburton says \* of Dr. Rutherford, "This, though the language of Toland, Tindal, Collins, and the whole tribe of Free-thinkers, yet comes so unexpected from a Professor of Divinity," &c.

Calixtus, a Lutheran in the 17th Century, tried to reconcile contending parties†; the zealous Protestants charged him with favouring *Poper*y; and a Book was published against his new Theology with this Title, *Crypto-papismus novæ Theologiæ Helmstädiensis*‡: he was also charged by *Lutherans* with favouring the *reformed*: he met with opposition from opposite parties.

Archbishop

\* D. L. Vol. iv. p. 131.

† Mosheim, Cent. 17. Sect. 2. Part 2. Chap. i. Sect. 21.

‡ Calixtus was of the University of Helmstadt, where Professors take an oath that they will endeavour to diminish dissensions amongst Christians. Mosheim, *ibidem*.



Archbishop Fenelon's Book, called *Maxims of the Saints*, was condemned \* when it got charged with *Molinism*.

Jonathan Edwards was accused of being an *Hobbiſt*. Cudworth's famous work was charged with Atheiſm and Arianiſm †.

Pope was ranked with Tories by Whigs, and with Whigs by Tories. Like good *Erasmus*.

Canon 8. Againſt the miſapplication of *ridicule*.

The ridicule thrown by Biſhop Warburton on Dr. Rutherforth might have been avoided, without hurting any argument. It can ſcarce be conceived to have ſprung from a deſire of promoting *truth* or *virtue*. Take particularly the quotation from the Monk of Cheſter about *Leon Garwer* ‡.

See alſo the concluſion of the Dedication to the Freethinkers, about the *Ægyptian* § Swine:— tending to exaſperate, rather than convince.

Instances might be taken from the character of the Procureſs in Foote's *Minor*.

II. Having ſeen, that Controverſy is in an imperfect ſtate, the laſt buſineſs we have, after laying down ſome rules, is to endeavour to conceive ſome other expedients for *improving* it.

i. We ſhould conſider what a wretched figure our controverſies muſt make in the eyes of thoſe, who are not zealous Chriſtians; of plain men in active life, who have not time to examine into the grounds of different Chriſtian tenets; or in the eyes of thoſe, who have a turn for Philoſophy, but have not ſtudied Chriſtianity. I fear Lord Bolingbroke gives || but too juſt an account of the matter in his

\* Volt. L. 14. Quiétiſme.

† See D. L. Pref. to Vol. ii. Part 1. p. 49, 50.

‡ D. L. Vol. iv. p. 116.

§ End of Ded. to Freethinkers.

|| Works in Quarto, Vol. iii. p. 423, 425.

his first Essay on Human Knowledge. Sect. 4.—Till we make a better figure in the eyes of thinking men, we must expect to lose the assistance of many, who would be very powerful in promoting the Christian cause\*.

ii. We should study the *causes* of past miscarriages, in history, as well as in modern times.—It seems likely, that the Christian Religion would have been successfully taught in *China*, had not the different sects of Christians there got into controversy with one another, and carried it on in such a manner as to disgust the Emperor. He had a very great respect for the † Missionaries, on account of their skill in Mathematics and Philosophy; these had not been so much cultivated in *China*, as it was seen they deserved: the People, however, were not unimproved in *morals*, which are chiefly wanting for the reception ‡ of Christianity.

iii. It might prevent our being over-heated in present controversy, if we considered how very *frivolous* and contemptible some past controversies have been, about which prejudices no longer subsist. That might be mentioned about the *immaculate conception*;—that about the question agitated in the 16th Century, whether original sin is to be placed in the class of *substances* § or *accidents*? But, perhaps, the heresy of *Galileo* might be as interesting as any to *us*. The decree of the Inquisition against him, and his abjuration, are in *Ladvocat's* short

\* The texts of Scripture, which enforce a prudent regard in Christians to those, who are not so, to those that are *without*, should here be noticed: 2 Cor. vi. 3.—Col. iv. 5.—1 Thess. iv. 12.—1 Tim. iii. 7.—Titus ii. 7, 8.—1 Pet. ii. 12, 15.

† 17th Cent. middle: see Voltaire Louis XIV. *Cérémonies Chinoises*.

‡ Book I. Chap. xix. Sect. 20.

§ Mosheim, *Index Flacius*, or 16th Cent. Sect. 3. Part 2. Chap. 1. § 33.



short Biographical Dictionary. Any dispute about an opinion deemed *heretical*, may come under religious *controversy*.

iv. As we shall be called *visionary*, and perhaps derided as chimerical, for speaking of improved controversy, as if it could ever be in fact established, we should fortify ourselves against such attacks, by conceiving clearly the nature of the thing.

A man *may* talk and converse, as if he were of no *party*; worldly politeness makes men converse so, not uncommonly; why might not a regard for religion? why might not this be extended to controversy? why might not a person use himself to speak in religious subjects, as an Historian, a Moderator, or what we have called a Judge? this would prevent heat and animosity.—It is by no means impossible to speak of natural religion, so as not to offend any set of Heathens; of revealed, so as to shew no disrespect to any thing, that pretended to come from Heaven. Of Christianity, so as to seem to despise neither Greek Church, nor Latin Church:—and of reformed Christianity, so as to displease neither Lutheran, Quaker, nor Baptist.—Such language, become general and habitual, would make men regard one another in a favourable light, and dispose them to unanimity and brotherly agreement.

v. Lastly, we should look out for *instances* of good controversialists, and make them the objects of our *Imitation*. *Augustin*, in his controversy with the Donatists, speaks very handsomely of *Cyprian*, at the same time that he opposes his opinions.—Those, who do not incline to go to the fountain head, may find specimens in Forbes. *Instruct. Hist. Theol. Lib. 10.*—Cyprian himself was amiably moderate and candid. *Cypr. Ep. 69. Oxon. translated in Wall's Bapt. Chap. ix 2d part. or p. 464, Quarto.*

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The amiable *Fenelon* got up into his own pulpit in the Cathedral of Cambray, where he was Archbishop, and condemned himself; it was in consequence of an act of authority, but his manner might shew, that he preferred the unity of the Church to his own private notions; his manner *was* such, that it has been \* said of him, though vanquished, he became the conqueror, by his noble candour.—The Emperor of China, *Camhi*†, made the Missionary speak openly against the Chinese religion, and in favour of the Christian.

Mr. *Hume's* note at the beginning of his Essay on the Populousness of ancient Nations, is very candid:—*Fas est ab hoste doceri.*

We have an interesting account of Dionysius of Alexandria, in Lardner's Works, Vol. iii. p. 102.—and of Didymus of Alexandria, p. 389 of the same Vol.‡

I must not omit mentioning the Letter of *Tillemont* to Lami, about our Saviour's having eaten the *Passover* the evening before he was crucified. *Monf. Nicole* speaks of this Letter § as a *perfect model* of Christian controversy; it does indeed seem a very good Letter: simple, frank, benevolent.—It is in the 2d Vol. of *Tillemont's* Memoirs, p. 678—754.—*Specimens* might be taken from p. 679. 2. (which is like *Sterne's* going hand in hand). Two first paragraphs of Section 1st.—neatness of method.—Sect. 20.—Sect. 97, conclusion of first paragraph.—and p. 753. col. 2d.—to the end||.

Did

\* Voltaire, Louis XIV, Quiétisme. † Ibid. Cer. Chinoises.

‡ Voltaire says, in his *Candide* (Chap. iv. p. 17.) that *Europeans* are different from others in something belonging to this matter. Il faut encore observer que jusqu' aujourd' hui dans notre continent, cette maladie nous est particuliere, comme la controverse.

§ Ladvocat under *Le Nain*.

|| The passages here only referred to, were most of them or all read at Lectures.



Did I recollect, at this moment, a Protestant Divine, who, when engaged in controversy, has come up to Tillemont\* in liberality and candour, I would mention him with pleasure; but my memory is imperfect, and my reading has been confined.

\* Dr. Burges says, in his Dedication to Charles 1st. (1631,) "Hee that is overcome of the truth, parteth victory with him that overcommeth, and hath the better share for his part."—The sentiment is good; and Dr. Burges was probably sincere; though by *Truth* he here meant his own opinions; and though he was to be conqueror, not conquered.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



## HEY'S THEOL. LECT. VOL. I.

### ERRATA.

#### Page

17. l. 16. for *anthenicity* read *authenticity*.  
18. last line—read Kennicott.  
47. l. 6. for *and* read *as*.  
49. l. 15. dele *the*.  
50. lowest line but one, for 34 read 43.  
52. lowest line but two, for *at* Palestine read *in* Palestine.  
55. end of l. 21, add *the*.  
56. lowest line but three, read *pentateuch*.  
68. l. 9. read *occurred*.  
70. lowest line, read *be*.  
73. l. 8. for *set* read *sect*.  
— Note \* l. 2. read *puérile*.  
101. l. 11. for *unto* read *into*.  
103. end of line 14, add *the*.  
107. l. 7. for *no* read *nor*.  
139. l. 15. read *Gennefareth*.  
229. l. 28. read *Oneirocritics*.  
233. l. 9. read *prophefying*.  
247. Note, l. 4. read *επιλυσιως*.  
253. l. 7. read, as to the third fort.  
264. l. 23. read *Pfalm viii. 2*.  
269. last line, read *Ecclesiasticus*.  
302. l. 8. from the bottom, read *useful*.  
317. l. 3. read, *Let us*.  
436. l. 8. read *practise*.—also p. 438. l. 4.  
437. l. 27. read *founded on the authority*.



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